LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Labour Unity
Founded 1921
Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Economics and Politics of Increasing Misery	*	R.P.D.
War on the Unions	*	Jim Gardner
End this Bi-Partisanship	*	William Gallacher
Where is that Defence White Paper now?	*	Cdr. E. Young, R.N. (Ret'd.)
Maisky on Litvinov	*	Andrew Rothstein
Bitter Freedom	*	Judah Waten

Labour Discussion Forum

December, 1957

One shilling and sixpence

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BREAK - DOWN

THE RICH VARIETY of response from our readers has become ever more varied since last month. Where to start, to give a glimpse of it? Well, I am often urged to 'learn from capitalist techniques'—though I don't know why one should aim to be that much out of date, when socialist techniques would seem more to the purpose? However, let us look at the main catch phrase of the typical twentieth century occupation: Market Research. Let us 'break-down' response from readers.

They arrange themselves into five groups (except that each one stubbornly remains his or her own unique self!) Group 1: *The Independent Left*. Main feature is that they are very independent indeed. The secretary of a *North Country Trades Council*: 'I shall continue to buy my L.M. till hell freezes, and to quote freely from it whenever I can—with due acknowledgements.' From *Glasgow*: 'I belong to what the Germans call "the Homeless Left". Such people are especially keen to know your standpoint, which is usually sound and the product of your own thinking—very rare in the Press. I quite agree with you in questions of war and peace; it was especially your sound attitude in the Hungarian affair which led me to choose you rather than the New Statesman, which on this occasion slipped to the wrong side. On Israel I agree with Levy and not Palme Dutt, who usually has my great respect. Long may he work so freshly and effectively for the cause of peace, for his party and country. I send £2 and will do my best to win a new reader. I am convinced it is worthwhile to help your paper to appear.'

It is hard to select from Group 2: *The Overseas Well-Informed*. Just back from *Australia*, 'where I have been for nine months. How much I appreciated L.M.! Kept me up-to-date and informed. Ten shillings added to my renewal.' A *Peking* subscriber: 'L.M. is *manna*, and indispensable to us: we would be lost without it. One is expected to be expert on what is happening in Britain—even to the extent of writing articles in the Chinese press. I can't send money for the fund, but I feel I owe it. Could you raffle this book, autographed by author and illustrator?' From *Canada*: 'I think L.M. is priceless to all good union men. I've looked at the postage and the fund level, and send $5 tonight.' He followed this with another subscription *and* a donation already collected from the new reader. From the *U.S. West Coast*: 'By all means this wonderful magazine must live. A small sum to help the burden of unjust taxation.' (The postage jumped in October for sealed copies to the U.S. from 4d. to 1s. 2d. a copy. Main reason was that, whereas mail to U.S.A. used to be allowed at Commonwealth rate, since October the U.S. has been 'expelled' from the Commonwealth and treated like any other 'mere' foreigner Or perhaps the Tory Government has just caught up with the news of that unfortunate subversive incident in 1776?). Our friend notes 'the

(Continued on page iii of cover)

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Vol. XXXIX, No. 12 CONTENTS December, 1957

Page

NOTES OF THE MONTH: Economics and Politics of Increasing Misery: *I. Challenge of the Sputniks; II. Marxism and Mr. Strachey; III. The Battle Against Misery*, by R.P.D. 529

WAR ON THE UNIONS, by Jim Gardner 542

END THIS BI-PARTISANSHIP! by William Gallacher 547

WHERE IS THAT DEFENCE WHITE PAPER NOW? by Cdr. E. Young, R.N. (Ret'd.) 551

A REVOLUTIONARY DIPLOMAT: *From Personal Recollections of Maxim Litvinov Recorded by Ivan Maisky*, by Andrew Rothstein 556

BITTER FREEDOM, by Judah Waten 561

LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM: *On 'H-Bomb Pacifism'* (J. Ellis, R. Palme Dutt); *World Trade, Political Forgeries, Women's Wages*, etc. (W. Bulgin, A. M. Hanmer, A. Hunt, A. E. Phillips) ... 566

DRAWINGS FROM CHINA, by Jack Chen 552-553

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO 550

INDEX TO VOL. XXXIX 573

Book Reviews:

The Modern Prince, by A. Gramsci: *A. Robertson* 571

The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire, by R. P. Dutt: *I. Cox* 571

Notes of the Month

Economics and Politics of Increasing Misery

'The whole trade union movement faces a determined attempt to depress the standard of living of the workers.'

The late JAMES CAMPBELL, *Railway Review,* **November 8, 1957.**

'There is a real prospect at present of at least a minor world slump.'

HUGH GAITSKELL, speech at Weymouth, October 20, 1957.

THIS fifth decade in the parallel existence of capitalism and socialism is witnessing a remarkable shift in the balance of world relations. 'Catching Up With the Russians' is now stated by *The Times* (November 6, 1957) to have 'almost become a national slogan' in the United States. 'The problem for American science', it is explained, 'is to overtake this (Soviet) lead of eight years'. The fufilment of this task is seen in terms of a long-term programme for 'the next twenty years ahead'. 'Less concern is being

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felt in Washington about current developments than about the marshalling of scientific resources in the next twenty years'. We have grown accustomed to the planning declarations of the first country of socialism setting the by now visibly attainable aim of 'overcoming and outstripping' the most advanced capitalist countries within a 'historically brief period'. Who would have dared to predict in 1917, or in 1927, or in 1937, or even in 1947, that a moment would arrive, within forty years of the revolution, when the most advanced capitalist country in the world would begin to proclaim the aim of 'catching up with' the first country of socialism?

I. Challenge of the Sputniks

But what is meant by 'catching up'? The normal meaning of 'catching up' is to move forward from a secondary, backward or retarded position in order to come abreast of the vanguard, and for this purpose to take active steps to make good a lag or deficiency. But where is the lag or deficiency in the United States? It is not in productivity as yet. On the contrary, the Soviet Union is still setting itself the aim of overtaking the level of productivity of the United States. The Khrushchov Anniversary speech claimed that the aim of overtaking the productivity of the most advanced capitalist countries has been accomplished in relation to Britain and France, but has still to be accomplished in relation to the United States. Thus the lag in the United States is not yet in the level of production, although it is already visible in the accelerating difference of the tempo of development of production over the past forty years, and especially over the past decade. The lag in the United States, wherein it is backward and the Soviet Union is in front, is in the social economic system.

Magic Secret

Socialism is the magic secret which has enabled the Soviet Union to achieve that superiority in the rate of development that is now becoming recognised by all observers. Not 'Socialism' in the Gaitskell-Ollenhauer mumbo-jumbo sense of a daub of 'idealistic' phrase-making whitewash to cover the reality of alliance with monopoly capitalism. But Socialism in the straightforward sense of social ownership of the means of production, won through the working class conquest of political power, under the leadership of the political party of the working class, with the guidance of the world-chang-

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ing teachings of Marx and Lenin. In vain the mumbling pedants of reaction and reformism seek to conceal the lesson of the triumph of socialism, by reviving the moth-eaten teachings of the prophet of nineteenth century *laisser faire,* Herbert Spencer, who denounced socialism as 'the coming slavery'. So these disciples of a dying and rotten system seek still to discount the triumph of socialism, whose achievement outstripping the West has now begun to compel recognition, by caricaturing it as the triumph of 'autocracy' in contrast to the 'democracy' of the capitalist world. Thereby they only reveal their own slave-owning instincts and belief in the superiority of slavery as an economic system. Vain delusion.

Triumph of the People

Their last refuge of sophistry will not avail them. Tsarism was autocracy. The Russian people smashed it. Korniloff, invited by Kerensky to subdue Petrograd by martial law, sought to reimpose autocracy. The Russian people smashed them. Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenitch, Wrangel, backed by all the resources of the 'freedom loving' West, sought to reimpose autocracy. The Russian people smashed them all. It was the tremendous release of the heroic and creative energies, for the first time in history, of a *free* people on the basis of socialism, which made it possible to raise Russia from the old dirt-ridden backwardness to the forefront of nations, to achieve those miracles in the war which aroused the breathless admiration of the world, and now to achieve these new miracles in the sphere of science and peaceful construction. Such miracles are not achieved by pulling automatic levers of command. They are achieved by *people* united in creative endeavour and enthusiasm.

Twofold Lesson

This is the lesson of the Sputniks as significant in the sphere of social theory as in the sphere of science and technology. For both aspects are aspects of a single whole. Unless the United States, and the other leading capitalist countries, transfer in time from the obsolete social economic system of capitalism to socialism, no 'crash programmes' will avail. The next twenty years would in that case see, not the fulfilment of the illusory aim of 'catching up' with socialism, but a deepening gulf in every sphere to the disadvantage of those countries and peoples which have failed to move with the times.

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Writing in the Sky

The ocular demonstration of the Sputniks in the sky has accelerated the universal recognition of the new phase of world development which has begun. On the one hand, we are on the threshold of the next great leap forward in human history, from the age-old limitations of this planet, to the conquest of the universe. But we are entering this new age with humanity still rent by a division between social systems, a division which should have been long ago outlived and resolved, and which now menaces and hinders the united advance of mankind into the new era. At the very moment of this breath-taking new advance of human science and mastery of nature, we are simultaneously entering the most critical phase of the parallel existence of capitalism and socialism in the world.

The Great Question Mark

The most critical in this sense. For the first time the superiority of the new social system in the rate of development of production and productivity, of education and science and technology, and of social standards, is beginning to be recognised by all observers as an indisputable objective fact, irrespective of political conceptions:

> The Russians are expected to double their total production over 11 years, while Britain—giving this country the benefit of any doubts—is expected to take 20 years. By then it is calculated that the Russian standard of living will probably be higher than that of Western Europe, and in some 30 years' time higher than America's.
>
> (Address of the Managing Editor of the Economist Intelligence Unit to the Liberal Summer School, August 8, 1957.)

The only difference in this estimate of a Western capitalist economic expert and in Khrushchov's estimate in his Anniversary speech is the period of time within which socialism will overtake and leave behind the highest standards of living of the most advanced capitalist country—the difference between fifteen years for overtaking the present total production of the United States (Khrushchov) or thirty years for surpassing the living standards of the United States (*Economist*). But the fact of the superiority of socialism in the rate of advance, and of the approach of absolute superiority in all spheres, is now recognised as an objective fact even by opponents. What is the conclusion to be drawn from this newly recognised truth? This is the key question facing statesmanship today.

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Choice of Two Paths

Two paths open out before the representatives of the West in the face of this now admitted advancing strength and approaching superiority in all spheres of the new socialist system. One is to recognise the facts of history, and to seek the path of peaceful co-existence, as the most favourable for the future of mankind and for the most peaceful transition from the old to the new. The other is to enter on a vain battle to fly in the face of history. To interpret the new facts only in terms of rival strength and future conflict. To concentrate every effort on building up the military strength of the declining system as a closed system armed and poised for war. To reject every peaceful overture from the new socialist world as a trap and a snare. To present the indisputable advancing superiority of socialism as a menace of world domination.

Misery Macmillan

More. In pursuit of these suicidal aims to seek to lash the declining economic system to new efforts and sacrifices, at the expense of the standards of the working people, through an economic programme which only worsens the contradictions and strains of the declining system. This is the path of increasing misery—the path which modern capitalism has already inflicted upon mankind at a rising tempo through two world wars, economic crisis, fascism, and cold war, and now seeks to carry forward to new heights of limitless destruction and ruin. For it is not the least significant symptom of the present world situation that the new triumphs of peaceful construction of socialism are accompanied by new and increasing strains in the economic situation of world capitalism.

II. Marxism and Mr. Strachey

A remarkable change has developed during the recent period in the climate of discussion in the capitalist world on the economic situation of capitalism. The boastful complacency of the temporary boom phase has collapsed like a pricked balloon. Once again it has given place to anxious alarms and uncertainty, panic predictions, and demands for desperate programmes of restriction and austerity. The 'New Thinkers' in the labour movement, popping up as always during every phase of temporary boom, poured out their tracts and tomes during the last couple of years to 'disprove' Marx

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for the hundredth time and announce the discovery of a 'new capitalism' which, thanks to the beneficent role of Labour Reformism, was able to guarantee security and ever advancing welfare for the people. *Twentieth Century Socialism* by the Socialist Union appeared in 1956. Strachey's *Contemporary Capitalism* appeared in 1956. As usual, the Revisionists were unfortunate in their date—as in their previous era of blossoming during 1927-29. Scarcely have their books appeared before the barometer of contemporary capitalism turns from 'Set Fair' to more dubious prospects. Today Hugh Gaitskell, former patron of Socialist Union, is the first of front bench political leaders to speak of the 'real prospect' of 'at least a minor world crisis'. How many would now be prepared to bet on the certain permanence of full employment?

Marxism and Modern Capitalism

The Marxist theoretical analysis of the laws of capitalist development needs always to be carried forward in the light of new facts and developments arising from the operation of those laws. The present never automatically reproduces the past. In the modern era the complexity of factors is greatly increased, not only from the further development of monopoly capitalism in the period of general crisis, but also from the parallel existence of capitalism and socialism in the world and the advance of national liberation with its strivings for economic independence. When Lenin fought the Revisionists in the earlier years of the twentieth century, on behalf of what was then called the 'Orthodox Marxist' school, he did not do so in the name of reasserting some scholastic dogma in opposition to the new facts of twentieth century capitalism. Instead, he used the weapon of Marxist theory to analyse the new phenomena, as shown in his work, *Imperialism*. There is no doubt that much remains to be done by contemporary Marxist economists in carrying forward Marxist theory to analyse the new and complex phenomena of the present phase of capitalism. But the Revisionists merely jump from the observation of new and often questionably observed empirical facts to proclaim the disproof of Marxism, and thereafter plunge into the morass of capitalist illusions and exploded fallacies.

Distortion of Marxism

Thus Strachey's *Contemporary Capitalism* (to take the most serious representative of these works, which is at any rate based on some study of Marx's writings, and not on a few second-hand

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formulas, like most of the others), sought to erect a monstrous edifice of theory to disprove Marx on the basis of an almost incredible mechanical vulgarisation of the Marxist theory of capitalist accumulation and increasing misery. He asserts:

> Marx taught that not only was it impossible for the wage earners to raise their standard of life under capitalism; he went further and announced that their standard must steadily decline.

He bases this assertion essentially on a single truncated quotation of a few lines from *Capital* out of context—a quotation which by no means says what he summarises it as saying, but something markedly different and more profound—without any attempt to relate it to the whole body of Marx's teaching on this issue, although that whole body of teaching would remove many of the misconceptions to which he gives expression. On this slender foundation he seeks to establish his refutation of Marxism and proof of the case for Labour Reformism as having been able to raise the standards of the workers by full employment, social security, increased wages and redistributory taxation.

Demolishing Aunt Sally

Any serious attempt to examine the new economic phenomena of contemporary Britain in the light of Marxist theory will always be welcome. But the method of demolishing Aunt Sally is least of all useful in relation to Marxist theory and capitalism. In the space here available it is impossible to examine adequately the questions involved. But it is difficult to believe that a student of the wide reading of Strachey should have been unable to take into account what Marx and Engels actually wrote on these questions.

Warning Signposts Ignored

Strachey ignores the express warning of Marx in relation to the theory of increasing misery as the outcome of capitalist accumulation that, like the theory of value, it is subject to manifold modifications in practical reality:

> This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation. Like all other laws, it is modified in its working by many circumstances, the analysis of which does not concern us here.
>
> (*Capital*, English edition, p. 660.)

He ignores the specific statement in the same passage that the worsening of total conditions is irrespective of the level of wages ('in proportion as capital accumulates, the lot of the labourer, *be his payment high or low*, must grow worse'). He ignores that Engels

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in his 1892 Preface to the *Condition of the Working Class in England* dealt specifically with the special economic conditions of Britain in the period of advancing capitalist prosperity, and its effects on the economic conditions of the workers, while emphasising the impermanent character of these factors with the approaching decline of the world monopoly. He ignores that the very passage from which he quotes is specifically preceded by a reference to 'the international character of the capitalistic regime', and that, whatever the controversies over the statistical economic estimates of the levels of earnings, intensity of labour, hours and the cost of living during the recent period in Britain, there is no dispute, as repeated United Nations Surveys have testified, that in the international measure of the whole field of operations of finance-capital the gulf between the wealthier imperialist countries and the under-developed countries has widened, and the absolute poverty of the mass of the populations in these countries has increased since the second world war.

Engels Refutes Strachey

Marx and Engels always fought against the distortion of the Marxist theory of the law of capitalist accumulation and increasing misery into a Lassallean Iron Law of Wages. Strachey says baldly: 'Marx said that real wages must fall; they have risen. Marx, being human, was wrong' (*Tribune*, September 28, 1956). The error of Marx, Strachey declares in his book (p. 151) was an error of 'political judgement', that he failed to take account of the role of the trade union and labour movement 'in the advanced capitalist societies' to 'balance, and in the end even begin to outweigh, the inherent tendencies of the system.' It is difficult to believe that Strachey should not have troubled to acquaint himself with the passage in which Engels in 1891 expressly exposed this fallacy—nearly a decade before Mr. Strachey was born, and two-thirds of a century before he published his 'new discovery'. Engels exposed this fallacy in his criticism of the draft Erfurt Programme of the German Social Democratic Party. The draft Erfurt Programme had said: 'Ever greater grows the number and the poverty of the proletarians'. Engels commented:

> 'Ever greater grows the number and the poverty of the proletarians.' This is not correct, expressed in this absolute fashion. The organisation of the workers, and their ever growing resistance, can establish a certain barrier to the growth of poverty. What certainly grows is the *insecurity of existence.*
>
> (Engels, *Critique of the Draft Social Democratic Programme*, 1891. letter to Kautsky, June 29, 1891.)

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If Strachey had taken this explicit statement of Engels as his text to express the viewpoint of Marxism, he might have been saved the labour of writing his book to announce belated 'discoveries' of the role of the organised working class (as supposedly overlooked by Marx!) in order to proclaim the refutation of Marxism and the defence of Reformism.

'Insecurity of Existence'

This penetrating insight of Engels' approach at the end of the nineteenth century, that is, on the eve of the transition of capitalism to the imperialist era and the general crisis, in judging the effects of capitalist development on the conditions of life of the working people, throws a flood of light on the Marxist conception. Engels emphasised, not statistical measures of wages and earnings and their fluctuations (which, as he points out, would always be affected by the strength of the working class struggle), but the growth of *'insecurity of existence'*. In the nuclear age, it might be added incidentally, the truth of this will be feelingly appreciated, and takes on an added and reinforced significance. We have here a remarkable example of the *living* application of the Marxist method, as opposed to the mechanical dogmas falsely attributed by critics to Marx. This particular measure of increasing misery, here suggested by Engels, precisely carried forward in a specific form for a specific period the general all-embracing master definition given by Marx in *Capital*.

What Marx Really Said

And now let us turn to what Marx actually said. Marx in his enunciation of the the general law of capitalist accumulation and increasing misery never even referred to the level of wages or earnings (though the innocent reader of Strachey might be misled into imagining that Marx was enunciating a Lassallean theory of subsistence wages). Marx said:

> Accumulation of wealth at one pole is therefore at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation at the opposite pole. (*Capital*, English edition, p. 661.)

And again:

> Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop on an ever extending scale the co-operative form of the labour process . . . the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and, with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the

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> magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers and in disciplined united organisation by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself (p. 789).

The sweeping range of this definition carries us forward, with remarkable precision, to its further fulfilment in the conditions of the imperialist era, the general crisis of capitalism and the first victories of the socialist revolution.

Historical Development of Capitalism

Marx never chose his words lightly, least of all in a work so long prepared and so elaborately prepared as *Capital*. He is giving here his cardinal conclusions on the whole historical development of capitalism and its outcome. It is immediately after the second passage quoted above that he gives his definition of socialism as the outcome, when 'the expropriators are expropriated' and the new society 'does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era: *i.e.*, on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production'. Thus he is dealing with the entire historical development of capitalism to its final downfall. He describes the further development of capitalism through the continued accumulation of capital, centralisation or growth of monopoly, and drawing 'the peoples' of the entire world into its net. How does he describe the effect of this process on the peoples of the world?

Increasing Misery Under Capitalism

For the purpose of this definition he does not even refer to the varying levels of wages and earnings, ceaselessly fluctuating according to place and time and historical conditions, and subject to a thousand factors. These factors he analyses elsewhere. In his formulation of the theory of capitalist accumulation and increasing misery he uses very different terms to describe the effects of capitalist development. 'Agony of toil'. 'Slavery'. 'Ignorance'. 'Brutality'. 'Mental degradation'. And again. 'Oppression'. 'Slavery'. 'Degradation'. 'Exploitation'. Yes. 'Brutality'—shades of the gas chambers and Hiroshima. '*Mental* degradation'—note well, Messrs. Strachey and friends; for these aspects of the civilisation of the *News of the World* and the tabloids do not enter into your

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shopkeeper's calculus of capitalism. But for Marx all these things are the heart of life. For Marx (who dedicated *Capital* to the memory of the 'brave', 'true', 'noble' fighter for the cause of the proletariat, Wilhelm Wolff) there is no dead science of economics; the breath of life inspires every line of *Capital*. Would that our students could study Marx anew at the source, instead of endless syllabuses and vulgarisations explaining 'What Marx Really Meant'.

Historical Truth

Who that has lived through the imperialist era, not merely the hundreds of millions of Asia and Africa, the majority of mankind, who have suffered under the heel of imperialist oppression, but also the peoples of the imperialist countries, cannot recognise from direct experience the deep truth of what Marx wrote? The foul bestialities of the colonial wars, Congo, Putumayo, the Eight-Power sacking of Peking, culminating in the bursting of the abscess in the first world war with destruction on a scale hitherto unparalleled in history. The long agony of the chronic depression and mass unemployment of the inter-war years; the world economic crisis; fascism and the death chambers; culminating in the horrors of the second world war eclipsing the first. Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And now the preparation of nuclear war. The first world war killed ten millions. The second world war killed thirty millions. How many hundreds of millions would the proposed nuclear war kill, which the Macmillans and the Sandys and the Norstads so lightheartedly prepare, and which a Field Marshal Montgomery can jovially describe as 'the next party'? And the pygmies of Reformism can strut through all this and proclaim that Marxism is disproved and that life gets better and better under capitalism.

III. The Battle Against Misery

Does this mean that Marxists passively accept increasing misery as the inevitable lot of mankind under capitalism? On the contrary. The Marxists, precisely because they understand the operation of capitalism and the class struggle, are the first in the field to fight against every misery offensive of capitalism and for raising the standards of the workers and of all sections of the people exploited by capitalism; against the destructive programme of the cold war, colonial wars and nuclear war and for the aims of peace. They carry forward this immediate fight against the misery programmes of capitalism and for these aims, not only for the sake of victory of

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these immediate aims, but also because they know that only through the strength of this immediate fight against the miseries caused by capitalism can they advance to end finally the causes of misery—that is, to end the capitalist regime and establish socialism. But this final aim is not fostered by illusions about capitalism or the limits of reformism.

War Economy and Cold War Economy

Full employment? It was not Reformism and the Labour Government that brought full employment. It was the horror of the second world war that ended the two decades of chronic depression and mass unemployment. War economy brought all the characteristics of a spurious boom—soaring profits, full employment, unlimited state expenditure, high taxation and rising prices. Hardly had the war ended before it passed, under the guidance of the Bevin-Marshall policy, into the conditions of the cold war. The normal temporary post-war boom of large-scale replacement and meeting pent up unsatisfied demand was accompanied by a distortion of the whole economy to maintain public expenditure for war purposes on a scale never before thought conceivable in peacetime. Once again a saturnalia of high profits and capital gains. Full employment. Crushing taxation. Rising prices. But the instability of the whole structure has begun to make itself manifest.

Factors of Crisis

The inequality of capitalist development has continued to operate on an enlarging scale. The gulf between the advanced capitalist countries and the under-developed countries has increased; and the primary producing countries are faced with crisis which shakes international economic conditions. Between the major capitalist countries the unequal development finds expression in the re-emergence of the dollar crisis, which was only concealed by subventions and military aid. The advance of production in the major industrial countries, not least in the United States, shows signs of slowing down, with rising levels of unused capacity. Shares swoop down, rise again, and fall again with feverish irregularity. It is characteristic that the news of the satellite, with the new emphasis on 'crash programmes' of enlarged military expenditure, brings an immediate upward movement on the Stock Exchange in the United States. Economists anxiously discuss the possible effects of an American recession.

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Economy Programmes

As the franc falls and the pound weakens, the French and British Governments turn to desperate economy programmes. As in every period of capitalist difficulty, the offensive on the standards of the workers becomes the key slogan. The Tory Government slashes public expenditure for all purposes save war, digs in to oppose wage increases, and prepares for conflict with the unions. The unions prepare to resist. The class struggle comes into the open as the centre of the political situation.

Into the Battle

Not passive speculations on the prospects or otherwise of 'recessions' or 'rolling recessions' or 'minor slumps' or 'major slumps', but the plain signs of developing class battle are now the clarion signal for the action of the working class. The strength of the working class can defeat the offensive of the Government and the employers, and thereby profoundly affect the further development of the economic and political situation. The fight on wages, rents and pensions is the immediate fighting front. The fulfilment of the Government's restrictive measures would mean the growth of unemployment, short time and lower production. The defeat of these restrictive measures would thus represent the first stage in the fight against the menace of a slump.

The Fight to End Misery

But the economic battle cannot be separated from the political battle. It is necessary to change the whole direction of policy in relation to public expenditure and the use of the country's resources, and this means in the first place to change the direction of foreign policy and replace the cold war programme by a programme based on peaceful co-existence and reduction of armaments. The immediate fight against the economic offensive of the Government is bound up with the fight to bring down the Tory Government and win a new policy for Britain. Only in this way can we decisively combat and defeat capitalism's programme of increasing misery culminating in the general destruction of a nuclear war, and open out the way to gain the bright alternative of peace and of socialism which alone can banish misery from the world.

November 12, 1957. R.P.D.

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WAR ON THE UNIONS

JIM GARDNER*

ANY lingering illusions about the Welfare State bringing about an era of full employment and growing prosperity must have been shattered by Government statements made by Ministers in the House of Commons. Thorneycroft and McLeod, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Minister of Labour respectively, leave no doubt in the mind of even the most credulous that if the Tory Government and Party are concerned about welfare, it is for their own class.

By their declaration, amounting to an instruction to employers and to the Boards of nationalised industry not to accede to any demand for a wage increase, these Tory Ministers in essence repeated the Baldwin slogan of more than thirty years ago—'the wages of all workers must come down'. For indeed, without wage increases in conditions of rising prices, real wages are bound to fall.

This challenge the trade unions dare not ignore. To do so would reduce the unions to sheer impotence in face of the most vicious attack on living standards since the 'twenties when, with the Miners in the lead, resistance to the attacks on wages led to the General Strike of 1926. These heroic struggles ended in defeat, but we can learn from that experience and ensure that, in accepting the challenge of 1957, the mistakes of 1926 will not be repeated.

During the honeymoon period since the Second World War, the employers have snatched the plums from the national cake in the shape of high profits and capital gains out of the labour of the workers: industrial shareholders have had six times more of an increase than have wage earners. They have been generously treated to the issue of bonus shares on which they now draw extravagant dividends, while the trade unions have made vain efforts to secure such increases in rates as would overtake prices.

While the national income has increased from £7,375 million in 1938 to £16,485 million in 1956, the percentage to wage earners remains the same at 44 per cent: but in 1956 it is shared by $2\frac{1}{2}$ million more workers. These figures show that whatever gains were obtained in piecework earnings from higher production and productivity, the major gains went to dividends. Yet Prime Minister

*Mr. Gardner, as many of our readers will know, is General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers.

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Macmillan seems to think he can still persuade the workers to agree that wage increases should be obtained only by higher productivity.

By increases actually obtained, the nominal standard minimum wages of engineering workers have gone up quite substantially compared with pre-war, but on comparative values there has been no increase. On the contrary, taking the engineering fitter as an example, the standard minimum wage has declined in value. Since 1938 prices are up by 200 per cent; whereas the minimum standard rate of the fitter, now at £8 19s. 4d., is only up by a little more than 180 per cent over the 1938 standard rate of £3 6s. 0d. To compare with 1938, the standard rate of the engineering fitter should be £9 18s. 0d. or 18s. 8d. more than it actually is.

Even compared with 1913 (and having in mind that the comparable value of the £ is only 4s.), comparison of standard rates is still unfavourable. In 1913 the standard minimum rate of the engineering fitter was £1 18s. 0d. It is now £8 19s. 4d., and it would need an increase of 10s. 8d. to establish a rate equal to the 1913 level of real wages. The minimum standard rate, far from having advanced, has actually declined—and this despite the technological transformation in engineering which has enormously increased production.

How far the standard rate of the engineering craftsman has deteriorated is shown by a comparison with the 'Human Needs Diet' for the Spring of 1957, which appears in the Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics. This shows that the amount required to provide the minimum diet for a family of two adults and three children in the Spring of 1957 was 69s. 9d. Taking the latest figures available, however, it is shown that, on the weighting of the Cost of Living Index, it requires a wage of £9 15s. 10d. that is, 16s. 6d. above the minimum rate of the engineering fitter of £8 19s. 4d. to maintain a family of two adults and three children on the lowest subsistence level.

This is arrived at by taking the cost of a minimum diet of 69s. 9d. or 35 per cent of the stipulated weight for food of the official Index of Retail Prices. Having regard to the fact that the diet upon which the calculations are made is designed to provide absolute minimum nutritional values at the cheapest possible price, an engineering fitter with a wife and three children, earning anything under £12 5s. 10d., the average earnings in marine engineering in April* of this year (as

*Average earnings in April did not include the increase of May 23, 1957. It may be that the September averages will be higher, although this is doubtful, and in any case the cost of living index rose by two points between April and September. Average earnings, which are inclusive of all extra payments, have to be compared with the hours worked. According to the Ministry of Labour Gazette, average hours worked in marine engineering in April of this year were 49.3. This means that marine engineering workers employed on the bare 44-hour week earn a great deal less than the published averages. Averages always presuppose that there are as many, if not more, workers earning less, than there are earning more.

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published in the Ministry of Labour Gazette, and about 38 per cent above the present standard rate), has very little to spare for any modest luxuries in which he may wish to indulge. This is to be contrasted with the luxury spending of people who never did a day's useful work in their lives.

The difference between the standard rate and average earnings is accounted for, as has already been shown by additional payments from piecework, overtime and nightshift premiums, special lieu rates, and other merit payments. It must be remembered, however, that minimum piecework earnings are related to a basic rate, which for the engineering fitter is £3 6s. 0d.

National agreement provides

> Piecework prices and bonus or basic times shall be fixed . . . as will enable a worker of average ability to earn at least 45 per cent over the basic rate.

This provides a piecework minimum for the engineering fitter of £9 10s. 1d. (inclusive of the pieceworkers' supplementary bonus of £4 14s. 4d.) or 5s. 4d. less than is needed for the 'Human Needs Diet'. The guarantee to pieceworkers only amounts, however, to the minimum standard consolidated rate which for the engineering fitter, as already quoted, is £8 19s. 4d.

Pieceworkers, on average, earn substantially more than the minimum, due to the favourable conditions under which local arrangements have been made in the period of full employment since the war. These favourable conditions are now passing, a circumstance of which many employers are taking advantage, by trying to reduce the price and basic time of piecework earnings. Similarly, average earnings are being affected by a quite considerable reduction in overtime work, and indeed, many workers are now facing redundancy and short time. Other additional payments could be similarly affected in the changing conditions facing industry as a whole.

The foregoing comparison of wages and prices between 1913, 1938 and 1957, shows it is not, as is alleged, rising wages that have brought inflation. Prices are shown to have been ahead of wages right up to and including the last increase obtained for engineering workers, following the strike in the Spring of this year.

Now look at the other side of the medal. By abolishing food and housing subsidies, adding to the burden of hire purchase, increasing purchase tax and the bank rate, and by its pernicious Rent Act, the Tory Government has itself caused a substantial rise

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in prices. These measures, particularly the Rent Act and the 7 per cent bank rate, have not yet had their full effect on prices—and there is now the prospect of a further 2s. on National Insurance contributions to meet the fraudulent proposal on Pensions.

Prime Minister Macmillan claims that these measures are designed to stop inflation and to maintain the economic basis for full employment. Their only effect is to cause unemployment and under-employment, and to increase forebodings of more unemployment. Unions are told that demands for a wage increase to meet rising prices would bring about more unemployment. But if real wages are reduced the demand for consumer goods will fall, meaning unemployment in the consumer goods industries. Similarly, by reducing capital investment there will be a fall in orders, again with the prospects of unemployment in the capital goods industries. Government policy is designed not for full employment, but for a margin, perhaps a big one, of unemployment.

Forebodings of a slump, even if a minor one, give cause for anxiety in every working class household. To resist policies which threaten the livelihood of our people is an obligation on the trade unions which must be honoured. No, it is not high wages that caused the crisis of Britain's economy.

Even the Chairman of the World Bank asserts that the main economic problems facing Britain and other industrial countries arise from the volume of unproductive investment. The perspective held out by the Tory Government in its link-up with the United States of America is for a continuation of unproductive investment, that is, investment in production of war machines. There could be no greater stimulus to recovery from economic crisis than top level agreement to ban weapons of mass destruction, and on an acceptable programme for general disarmament.

If nuclear energy and all the other new technological resources were used in the service of man to make life more happy and prosperous, the dreadful fears which burden our lives today would become an unpleasant memory. That is the road we wish to travel. It is the road of the pioneers who gave life to our labour movement in the struggle aimed at removing the main obstacle to progress, the contradiction between the developing social forms of production and the private ownership of the means of production. The Labour Party's policy statement *Industry and Society*, from that standpoint, is quite inadequate in face of the problems of our time.

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Meantime, the struggle continues. Strengthened by this year's Trades Union Congress decision on wages and economic policy, the trade unions must stand firm against the vicious attacks of employers and their Tory Government. Congress declared that it has

> no wish to chase an inflationary spiral but on the other hand is not prepared to accept the imposition of a policy, the effect of which would be to debase the living standards of the workers and accordingly rejects the principle of wage restraint in any form and reaffirms the determination of the Trade Union Movement, whilst prices and profits remain uncontrolled, to take such steps, industrially, as will ensure that wages keep pace with rising costs.

Congress also urged all trade unionists

> to work and campaign through the wider Labour Movement for the early return of a Labour Government pledged to the task of applying those principles, based upon an equitable distribution of the burden, which will halt the inflationary trend and have the effect of re-establishing the economy of the nation on a firm foundation.

To get the present Government out is for the workers a matter of self-defence. Meeting their obligations in mobilising a resistance against the attacks on the living standards, the unions must compel employers to give adequate wage increases and at the same time co-ordinate their efforts in the broader labour movement to force a General Election. Here unity is of paramount importance; unity between all sections of our movement, abandoning the false divisions which keep Communists and Labour Party members apart. These are vital days. It needs vitality to undertake the tremendous tasks facing our movement.

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END THIS BI-PARTISANSHIP!

WILLIAM GALLACHER

WHEN I was in the House of Commons I used to look on Mr. Harold Macmillan as an outstanding example of portentous, placid, bourgeois culture. When he spoke, or even as he sat, his superiority to the rabble on the other side was too obvious to be hidden. I used to compare him, in my mind, with some of those on the opposite Front Bench who patented and monopolised the resounding, palatable phrase 'our social revolution'. Macmillan's superiority was openly aggressive; theirs, they being on the side of the rabble, loftily concealed. But they had one thing in common: hatred of Communism—which in its essence is fear of the working class. Whatever the difference of language, Macmillan and these representatives are all committed to the task of saving capitalist society from the very real menace of the working class inspired and led by the Communist Party.

But capitalist society is in anything but a healthy condition. Far, far from it. Decay, dry-rot, or whatever you may care to call it, has eaten deep into its foundations. Where now is that 'far-flung Empire', the 'greatest Empire the World has ever seen'? Going down into the limbo of forgotten history; while new great world-changing forces are marching forward as the guardians of the future. But the representatives of the old order never willingly give up. They will hang on to the last—till the workers, strong and resolute, drive them off the stage.

In the meantime they can only keep going by forcing down the standard of living of the working class and by the goodwill of their more powerful competitors across the Western ocean. This provides us with an amazing exhibition of bourgeois bluster and bourgeois servility. Macmillan is the strong man who leads a strong government that intends to take a strong line to save the £ (they mean: to save capitalism), even though it should mean an open battle with the trade unions. Thorneycroft and Hailsham (whose head has got blown up higher than the sputniks since his recent promotion) have been his principal buglemen on this, their preparedness for war against the unions. Actually all this bluster is based on the calculation that right-wing labour leaders and the majority of the General Council are as much afraid of working class action as they themselves and can be relied on to do all in their

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power to hold the workers back. It is only the strength of the workers' resistance which can defeat this calculation.

Here we have Macmillan, the strong man of the Tory party, ready to sacrifice the well-being of the people to save his own parasitic class. Higher rents which means a cut in the household budget; higher bank rate which means fewer homes, schools, hospitals, health services, higher prices and higher rates, and heavier debts for local authorities. Along with all this a quite definite instruction to employers not to grant any more wage increases. Isn't it time the workers took a hand and cleared this gang of blatant capitalist class representatives out of the House of Commons? It can be done if we take the task up in earnest. In the factories, in the local labour parties, trade union branches and district committees, with mass public demonstrations, such a ferment can be aroused as will force a general election that will put paid for all time to the bombast.

But see this big, bold bourgeois Macmillan when Eisenhower, representing the much bigger bourgeoisie of America, gives a whistle. Dropping everything he goes rushing off in the same servile manner as he expects the leaders of the Labour Party to adopt towards him. Can you imagine, this oh, so superior, spokesman of the British ruling class sending a reply to Eisenhower, 'I'm very, very busy at the moment. If you want to see me, take a few days away from golf, jump into a 'plane and I'll be waiting for you'. He hasn't got the guts. The Americans can spit in his eye and he rubs it off and, with a sycophantic smile, comes back for more.

When they went into Suez they looked to Dulles and Co. helping them out as they so docilely were driven into the American war in Korea. But the big Oil Moguls of America were more concerned with getting Britain out of the Middle East than getting them back in. So Dulles said 'Come out' and they came out. Then Dulles 'added insult to injury' when he jeeringly said 'If I were a young American lad going to war in the Middle East, I wouldn't want a British soldier on one side of me and a French soldier on the other, I'd feel safer without them.' That should have finished any self-respecting British bourgeois with the Americans. But in these days self-respect is at a discount. Their one concern is to save their own class system and their own class power. For this hopeless cause they will not only sacrifice the people, they sacrifice their manhood and, let this be clearly understood, they will sacrifice the country. That is what is involved in the servile scurrying to

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Washington at the command of Eisenhower, the rubber-stamp or stooge of the big monopoly capitalists of America. So Macmillan, the stooge of a stooge, returns to Britain after his panic flight to a panic meeting in Washington, and immediately his government makes what is tantamount to a declaration of war on the trade unions, and he himself babbles about the necessity of giving up some of our independence. What a laugh that is! What independence has there been since Churchill's despicable speech at Fulton, Missouri, in 1946? None whatever. Some 100 Labour members of parliament signed a protest against that speech and sent it to Attlee, as Prime Minister, expecting him to repudiate what Churchill had said. But, backed by Ernest Bevin, Attlee remained dumb and by his silence endorsed the Fulton speech.

Britain is now an occupied country and, as was made evident by what happened in connection with the Suez adventure, the American troops aren't here to benefit Britain. Britain has become a forward base for American war policy, a satellite, yes, but an expendable satellite. Truly shocking that such a betrayal could take place without the organised working class rising in protest. Only the servility of the right-wing leaders of the labour movement made it possible. It is behind these Macmillan and his cronies shelter. Without their aid the parasitic bourgeoisie would be at the mercy of the working class. It was such 'leaders' of the working class who saved them at the time of the General Strike. They saved them again by diverting the great socialist surge of 1945 into safe channels: 'our Socialist Revolution'. While the country was being handed over to American occupation.

At the N.A.T.O. parliamentary conference, an American general speaks of all their H-bomb bases being on the alert—ready to bomb and destroy the first Workers' Republic. This general and the big monopoly capitalists of America, whom he represents, would desire above all things, if only they had the power, to destroy and banish Socialism off the face of the earth; and sitting there unprotesting is George Brown, M.P., a professed Socialist. He is there representing and speaking for the Labour Party, representing and speaking for Bevan and Frank Cousins, aye, and for Zilliacus who has so little respect for the Communist Party because of its size and so pleased with being in the Labour Party because it is so big.

But where is it going? What is it doing? These are questions the answers to which determine the strength or weakness of a party, and at present on that ground the Labour Party is weak, deplorably

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weak. Macmillan is a menace to the people, he is a menace to Britain. The Labour Party has the task to fight him. How can it, if it also accepts American domination and all that arises therefrom, instead of fighting for the progressive foreign policy decisions of the Brighton Labour Party Conference?

The time has come to end this betrayal of the working class and of the country. Socialist self-respect, Socialist integrity calls for action to remove the Macmillan government. But that is not enough. The bi-partisan foreign policy of the Labour Party and the Tories must go with Macmillan, and with their going American troops and American domination must also go. In their place a new expanding Socialist policy at home, directed towards an ever-increasing standard of living, and a foreign policy of friendship with the Soviet Union based on an end to the Cold War and the genuine pursuit of lasting peace.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

HUNGER MARCH DAYS

Fifteen hundred men and women marched from all parts of the country to London to present a One Million Signature Petition demanding the abolition of the means test, return of the 10 per cent. benefit cuts, abolition of the Anomalies Bill, return of the cuts in social services. Everywhere they went they were enthusiastically acclaimed by the massed thousands of workers. . . . The National Government conducted a well-organised and determined campaign against the march. Every capitalist newspaper turned its 'guns' against the marchers. All the threadbare stunts, Communist Riot, Moscow Gold, etc., were brought out—but in vain. The marchers steadily closed in on London, reaching millions of workers on the way and carrying the message of revolt into every hamlet. . . . The Government mobilised the largest force of police on record. Lord Trenchard, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, warned the populace to keep away from the marchers. Sir Charles Biron, on the bench at Bow Street, informed the public that 'it was their duty to assist the police in carrying out its duty on pain of being arrested for not doing so'. But the solidarity of the working class with the marchers grew by leaps and bounds.

From *The Struggles of the Unemployed*,
by Pat Devine, December, 1932.

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WHERE IS THAT DEFENCE WHITE PAPER NOW?

Commander EDGAR P. YOUNG, R.N. (Retired)

WHEN the Government produced its White Paper on Defence (Cmd 124), in April of this year (though reference was made to the need of a fresh appreciation of the problem and of a new approach towards it), its policy was still based on the same old conceptions of 'speaking from strength', on its possession of 'the great deterrent'. N.A.T.O. forces on the ground were to serve, more especially in Europe, as 'a trip wire', which would produce 'massive retaliation' if attacked. As the destructive power of 'the great deterrent' grew with the advent of the H-bomb, so it was felt safe to cut down the physical strength of that 'trip wire'; and, in Britain, to concentrate almost solely on 'the defence of the deterrent' (*i.e.*, of the bomber bases in Britain, from which 'the deterrent' would be delivered) by manned aircraft.

The fatal consequences for Britain herself of a war fought in these circumstances, candidly admitted in the White Paper, were accepted by the Government for a reason given by the Foreign Secretary. Selwyn Lloyd, in the course of an interview broadcast by the B.B.C., blurted out the reason, saying:

> Britain is, after all, only a small part of the Commonwealth, and we could carry on the war from elsewhere.

The amazing thing is that we, who really count in this matter (since it is we, the people of Britain, who would be called upon to pay the price, should the worst come about), should have accepted this appalling prospect without any effective protest.

The falseness of the foregoing policy, based on a false appreciation of the situation, was already apparent at the time it was enunciated. Today, however, it stands painfully exposed. The U.S.S.R. has given clear proof, by the successful launching of *Sputniki* I and II, that it is, in fact, in possession of an accurate inter-continental ballistic missile. Possession of 'the great deterrent' has passed from the U.S.A. to the U.S.S.R. It is the U.S.S.R. which can now 'speak from strength'. And it is most significant that the Soviet Government's reaction to this changed situation, is to demand still more vigorously the destruction and banning of the A- and H-weapons (essential feature of 'the great deterrent') and for general disarmament on a massive scale.

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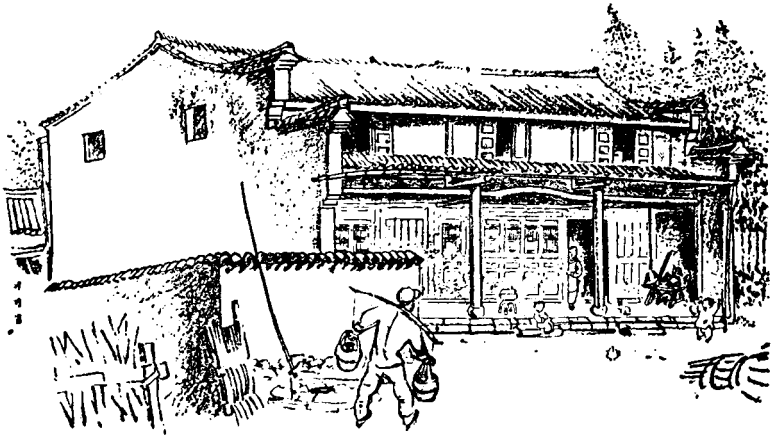
Drawings of China by Jack Chen

Old cottage: 15 people lived in these four rooms



A former poor peasant's new house

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MANY WILL remember the name of JACK CHEN, artist and writer, who lived for many years in this country prior to his return to China.

In his book, NEW EARTH, recently published by the New World Press, Peking, he sets out a clear and happy picture of Socialist development in the Hsingten County of China from the time of the liberation in May, 1949, until the present. The book describes at first-hand how the peasants of this country solved the problem of poverty, and is amply illustrated by the author's own admirable drawings (examples on this page) and photographs. It is available in this country from Central Books Ltd., price 6s.

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The present unconcealed consternation in Western governmental and military circles can hardly, in these circumstances, be explained by fear of abuse by the U.S.S.R., on the lines of which they themselves would be guilty, of its predominance in military power. It is due rather, I would suggest, to their consternation at the consequences flowing logically from their internal affairs.

So far as Britain is concerned, the fact that she is absolutely undefendable, and is therefore doomed to swift annihilation if involved in nuclear war, has been confirmed. More, the 'pipe dream' of her rulers, of regarding Britain as 'expendable' and of carrying on their war from 'elsewhere', has been dissipated: there is no longer an 'elsewhere' from which they could carry on! Already in the White Paper on Defence, it was admitted that the Navy was of no more than problematical value, that the Army was required only for 'colonial' wars. Now it seems the Air Force is coming into the same problematical category.

The proposed reduction of the man-power of all armed forces to 375,000 by the end of 1962, about which there has been so much controversy, must now, clearly, be radically revised in a downward direction. Many jobs are at stake here, especially for the Senior Officers who advise the Government on policy. Many thousands of millions of pounds are at stake, too, for those who have hitherto counted on being able to go on reaping the rich harvest produced by the war scares of their organs of propaganda.

When Admiral Lord Mountbatten, First Sea Lord, has pretended that money must be voted for the Navy to provide it with nuclear-powered submarines to serve as launching-platforms for short- and medium-ranged nuclear-headed ballistic missiles against the U.S.S.R., he surely realises that the large number of submarines possessed by the U.S.S.R. must have been built precisely to counter this menace, and not, as he has pretended in the past, for the purpose of cutting our ocean life-lines. In the business field, on the other hand, we have had Lord Weeks, Chairman of the Finance Corporation for Industry and former Chairman of Vickers, arguing that the British aircraft industry cannot be commercially competitive unless it gets even bigger orders than in the present from the R.A.F. The latter was generous enough, moreover, to give the Army a cue, by specifying the desirability of Transport Command acquiring more aircraft for flying troops about 'to deter or suppress limited war', *i.e.*, for maintaining the colonial system.

If the Government has any sense, it should see in all this an easy way out of its difficult situation in relation to man-power for the

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Armed Forces. It stands committed by its White Paper on Defence to having all the 375,000 men specified for 1962 recruited as volunteers, and, in anticipation of this, to having no further call-up under the National Service Acts after the end of 1960. The Government is not getting volunteers on the scale expected, and in the present circumstances is unlikely to get them. What of trying an improvement of the pay and conditions in the Armed Forces? The controversy aroused not long ago by John Strachey, who proposed payment to men serving in accordance with industrial standards, has shown that this would prove prohibitively expensive. Moreover, would such an improvement persuade enough young men to volunteer to go out and fight 'dirty' wars, such as our National Service men are obliged to fight, in Cyprus, Kenya, Arabia and Malaya?

The Government might hope, however, to step-up recruiting by producing unemployment, as would appear to be the forthcoming result, whether intended or not, of its present financial and economic policy. The latter policy would, presumably, be fought against by the entire Labour Movement, but such a negative stand is surely not enough by a long way. The Labour Movement must have a positive outlook in this connection, and that outlook must include, in the first place, a demand for the immediate adoption of a foreign policy which is untainted by war-mongering or imperialism, and which makes disarmament on a really large scale an early possibility. The Armed Forces required for the implementation of such a policy should be easily obtainable by voluntary recruitment, if reasonable improvements of the conditions of service were introduced. This could easily be done by drastic reduction from the £1,500 million a year which is ruining our economy.

No decision of this character is to be expected to emerge from the meeting of President Eisenhower and Mr. Macmillan at the December N.A.T.O. conference in Paris. The object is very evidently to give a boost to and tighten up an organisation which can serve only the most vicious purpose and bring it under increased U.S. control. There is therefore clear need for united and militant action by the British workers in this matter. There is much evidence that any action they may take will receive powerful support from the peoples of France, Italy, and the other N.A.T.O. countries, including the Germans of West Germany, whose experience has made them see more clearly than we do the extreme danger of any continuation of the existing situation.

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A REVOLUTIONARY DIPLOMAT

From Personal Recollections of Maxim Litvinov recorded by Ivan Maisky

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

ON November 7, 1919, Lord Curzon—then British Foreign Secretary—grudgingly and ungraciously gave his consent to the entry into Denmark of a Soviet Mission to negotiate a mutual exchange of war prisoners with Great Britain. The head of the Mission was to be Maxim Maximovich Litvinov.

Negotiations on this question had been dragging on since January, 1919. The Soviet Government had taken the initiative in a radio message to the British Government. Throughout the long distance talks which then began, Lord Curzon was as arrogant and insulting as he could be, obviously imagining that he was still Viceroy of India and the Soviet authorities hardly fit to talk to. But this was not the real reason for the delay. The British Government's quisling, Admiral Kolchak, began an offensive against the Red Army from Siberia in January; others attacked from south and north-west. Only when all these threats had been decisively defeated did Curzon condescend to talk business.

The Red Army was ragged and poorly equipped, compared with the White armies and foreign invading troops financed from London and Paris. The Soviet people were hungry and disease-ridden. But their spirit was indomitable, and it had triumphed. Regretfully, Curzon and his colleagues had to recognise the fact. But now a new trial faced the Soviet leaders. They had to encounter the victorious Great Powers of Western Europe, swelled-headed beyond belief after defeat of Kaiser's Germany a year before, in the peaceful arena of diplomacy. The Soviet Government picked for this purpose an old and tried Bolshevik.

Maxim Litvinov had helped to form the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1898. After the arrest of its first Congress, that year, he went on working underground at Odessa until his own arrest in 1901. Escaping from prison next year, he emigrated. For many years he lived in London, working as a clerk under the name of 'Harrison'. But all the time he was an active member of the Bolshevik fraction in the R.S.D.L.P., one of Lenin's loyal colleagues, secretary of the Bolshevik group among London emigrants, their representative at international Socialist conferences.

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Immediately after the November revolution, exactly 40 years ago, he was appointed plenipotentiary representative of the Soviet Government in London. His little book, *The Bolshevik Revolution: Its Rise and Meaning*, published in April, 1918, by the British Socialist Party, had a wide influence on the rank and file of the Labour movement. Later that year he was expelled from Great Britain and exchanged for the British agent, Bruce Lockhart. Familiar with all the methods of the British ruling class, Litvinov was now going to negotiate with them.

The passages from his recollections which follow are taken from an article by Academician I. M. Maisky, Ambassador in Great Britain from 1932 to 1943, in *Voprosy Istorii* (Problems of History), the historical journal of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., for May, 1957. The article, a lucid and enlightening account of the background of and negotiations for the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement of March, 1921, is unfortunately too long to print here. But in the course of it Maisky writes;

> I more than once urged Litvinov to write his memoirs, but without success. Then I suggested that he should tell me at any rate about some of the most interesting episodes of his diplomatic work. Litvinov agreed. We used to meet in our leisure moments, and Litvinov would give his story. Later I would write it out and give it to him to read. Sometimes he made corrections to my record. He kept one copy for himself and gave the other to me. That is how Litvinov's account of his work in Denmark in 1919-1920 came into existence. In this connection I think it not out of place to remark that the book, *Notes for a Diary, by Maxim Litvinov*, which appeared in mid-1955 in London, is a forgery.

Litvinov's account follows.

'The number of British prisoners whom we held was insignificant —35 officers in all, who had fallen into our hands in the Caucasus. But among them were members of British aristocratic families. The relatives of the officer prisoners of war were very anxious about them and were all the time pressing Curzon to secure their return. On my advice our Government brought all the British prisoners to Moscow, and I had a personal talk with some of them at the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, where they were brought from their internment camp. All the officers insistently asked me to speed up their return home. I replied, as was the truth, that the Soviet Government was ready to begin negotiations for an exchange of prisoners but that the British Government was evading the issue. The officers, who had the right of corresponding with their relatives, naturally wrote home about their talks with me and demanded that the British Government should agree to the immediate opening of

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negotiations. Their relatives besieged Curzon with their requests. This played its part in speeding up the beginning of negotiations.

'When finally, towards the end of 1919, the question of exchange was decided in principle, technical preparations for the meeting began. This was no easy task in the conditions prevailing. Soviet Russia was encircled by a military, political and economic blockade. We were cut off from the whole world. What was to be done?

'I put the question this way: since the R.S.F.S.R. had no relations with other countries, it was the British Government which should make all the technical arrangements for the meeting. Curzon of course did not like this, but in the end he had to meet our request. As a result the British did all the preparatory work, including negotiations for my passing through the Estonian front (which then still existed) and through the countries on the way to Copenhagen.

'At the end of November, 1919, I set out accompanied by my "staff", which consisted of two typists, Zaretskaya and Milanova. We were allowed through the Soviet-Estonian front, and arrived at Reval.* The British sent a special steamer there which brought us to Copenhagen. The British representative O'Grady was already there with his staff (of course much more numerous than mine); among them a special part was played by two representatives of the Intelligence Service. I had an extremely hostile reception in Danish quarters. From my very arrival in Copenhagen the Danish press began a campaign against the R.S.F.S.R. and against myself personally. The Danish public, including the majority of the Social-Democrats, boycotted me. The difficulty of the situation is shown by the trouble over accommodation for the Soviet Mission in the Danish capital.'

Here Maisky interrupts Litvinov's story to quote a telegram from G. V. Chicherin, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to Curzon:

> Our delegate Litvinov tried to ignore the presence of numerous detectives, until their obtrusive presence prompted the manager of the hotel where he was living to ask him to leave. . . . For the same reason the hotel where Mr. O'Grady very kindly gave instructions that rooms should be taken for our delegate, returned the deposit paid in advance, not wishing to become a place of assembly for the crowd of pestering police agents. Mr. O'Grady, who has throughout displayed the greatest kindness and consideration, has evidence of all this in his possession.

Finally, thanks to British pressure stimulated by O'Grady personally, the hotel question was settled. Litvinov in his narration explained that while Lord Curzon had reckoned on brief negotia-

*Now Tallinn, capital of Estonia and its chief port.

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tions (a few days only), and those strictly limited, 'I had come to Copenhagen with quite different objectives which Lenin had given me'. His aim was to widen the exchange of prisoners; and to prolong his stay in Copenhagen as long as possible, for the following reason: 'In view of the absence of relations between Soviet Russia and other countries, my mission in effect became the sole representation of the Soviet Government abroad, facilitating its relations with foreign States and with the democratic public of Europe. At the same time it ensured to the Soviet Government something like *de facto* recognition by a number of countries which were seeking contact with the R.S.F.S.R. for various reasons. Using the methods of manœuvre, combining firmness and flexibility, I succeeded in carrying out Lenin's directives completely and achieving the aims I have set out. In particular, my negotiations with O'Grady lasted not for a few days but for nine months.

'In accordance with Curzon's instructions, O'Grady at first proposed to negotiate on the narrowest basis, *i.e.*, for the exchange of 35 British and those Russians held by the British. I disappointed him immediately by requesting that in exchange for the 35 British officers we should have returned to us all the Russian prisoners of war in all countries except Germany—in France, Italy, Belgium, etc. I insisted particularly on getting back the prisoners of war who were in Denmark (not less than 10,000 of them were there, because many prisoners had escaped from Germany).'

Here Maisky gives the following additional details, illustrating the hostile ring around Soviet Russia. The prisoners included (i) about 100 hostages taken at Archangel and brought away by the British when evacuating their troops from North Russia, (ii) Russians arrested in Persia and deported by the British to India, (iii) Russian citizens interned by the British Government in Turkey, Egypt and in the British Colonies, (iv) Russian prisoners of war who had escaped from Germany and were interned in Denmark, Belgium, Holland, etc. Litvinov also demanded that a Soviet representative be allowed to sit on the International Commission which was in charge of Russian prisoners of war in Germany. The account continues:

'O'Grady at first was simply overwhelmed by our demands, and tried to persuade me not to insist on such extensive compensation for 35 British prisoners. The two representatives of the Intelligence Service whom I mentioned earlier exercised pressure on him in this sense. But I was unyielding, and O'Grady finally had to inform London of my demands. Curzon of course was outraged to the

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depths of his soul, and at first would not yield. A very acute situation arose. Rumours of a rupture began, but I would not yield. A prolonged exchange of telegrams between O'Grady and Curzon ensued. The relatives of the British officers continued to besiege Curzon. Curzon raged, but began to yield step by step. All this took time. The negotiations dragged out. O'Grady was worried, but I only smiled; the delay in the negotiations after all fully corresponded to the directives I had from Lenin. In the long run we won a complete victory, and on February 12, 1920, O'Grady and I signed an agreement under which, in exchange for the 35 British officers, we were to receive all the Russian prisoners of war from Britain and all other countries. Moreover, the British had to take on themselves all the negotiations with France, Italy and other States on this question, since the R.S.F.S.R. had no relations with them. In some cases the British Government simply advised the Governments concerned to approach me direct. As a result while at Copenhagen I concluded agreements for exchange of war prisoners with France, Belgium and Hungary. Thereby the international prestige of the R.S.F.S.R. grew, and its *de facto* recognition was strengthened.

'I should say that I have retained friendly memories of O'Grady. An Irishman by nationality and a member of the Labour Party, he was sent to Copenhagen because the British Government considered that, as a representative of the workers, it would be easier for him to come to an agreement with the Bolsheviks than for any bourgeois politician or diplomat. Personally, O'Grady cherished no particular hostility to the Soviet regime. . . . Consequently, where he saw no great injury to British interests, he was ready to meet us half-way. Little by little quite decent relations grew up between us, and O'Grady always listened attentively to what I said. But O'Grady was not his own master. He was restricted, in the first place, by the two representatives of the Intelligence Service who were in Copenhagen, and who were acting as "commissars" over him. He was further restricted, and that decisively, by London—which meant Curzon first of all, and then the British Government. Hence arose all the difficulties and obstacles. Personally O'Grady did nothing to increase them, and frequently tried to reduce them.'

The end of this month will be the sixth anniversary of the death of Maxim Litvinov. It is appropriate that this record of one episode in the work of a really Socialist diplomat, unfalteringly true to his class and not to be shaken by the wiles or the arrogance of the enemies of the workers, should appear in our pages.

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BITTER FREEDOM

JUDAH WATEN

'IF only I could get a job', a middle-aged Hungarian migrant said to me outside the office of the organisation that had brought him to Australia.

He had an hour or so to while away before he could see the secretary of the organisation and he was desperately anxious to talk. 'When I've told you the story of my life you'll know why I must get a job', he said. 'I come from Budapest. I was born there 56 years ago. My father owned a small photographic business and he took me in after I left school. When he died I ran the shop and I made enough to marry on and keep a wife. Don't imagine I was swimming in gold—I wasn't. Things were very hard for us Jews in Horthy's time. But I kept my mouth closed and I survived, not like a cousin of mine who was sent to prison and was never heard of again.

'Just before the war things began to go from bad to worse. My shop window was broken every Monday and Thursday as the saying is, and once when I was walking down the street I got such a hiding from a gang of fascist hooligans that my family despaired of my ever getting out of bed again. Every tooth I had was knocked out of my mouth and God alone knows how many fractures I had in my head. My dear wife nursed me back to life again; she wouldn't hear of me being taken to hospital where a Jew could be done away with at the whim of a fascist doctor.

'When I was on my feet again I said to her: "for the sake of our only daughter let us get out of this hell before we are lost". But before we could do anything it was already too late. The war had started and Horthy was marching with Hitler. And we Jews were being shipped off to forced labour and the extermination camps. Every minute of every day I expected to be seized. Still, I kept my business open, photographing wedding couples and making enlargements of heroes killed on the Russian front. What else could I do? Even in hell you have to eat. They left me alone for a long time. Sometimes I used to think: "I am such a quiet man maybe they'll overlook me and my family".

'But the greatest sorrow of my life soon befell me. One morning my wife went out to buy food and she never came back. A Hungarian S.S. patrol had seized her in the street to make up a transport for Auschwitz. That day I abandoned my shop and fled

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with my little daughter to another part of the city. We never slept in the same place two nights running. We slept in doss houses, in cellars, in stables, under bridges and in the open. But our luck didn't hold out for ever. One night a German army patrol caught us. By then the Russians were already pushing into the city and the Germans were killing all the remaining Jews almost on sight. But the officer who had charge of us had a different idea. He locked us up with another hundred or so Jews in a building that was right in the line of the Russian advance so that we'd be killed by Russian guns. Somehow the Russians got to know we were in the building and they stopped firing. In hand-to-hand fighting they cleared the Germans right out of the whole area. Then they let us out.

'That's how my daughter and I came to be alive when the war ended. We were the sole survivors of a family of over a hundred souls. Now I had only my daughter. If not for her what was there to live for? I re-opened my shop and we began to breathe again. I said to myself "the new régime doesn't persecute Jews and I'll be all right if I keep my mouth shut". But do you think they'd leave me alone? Not on your life. Now one official, now another, began to plague me. Not on account of my being a Jew. No. But I was a small capitalist. So I was forced into a kind of co-operative. The whole thing went against the grain. I can't stand co-operatives and collectives. I like to be on my own, minding my own business. To tell you the truth I was beginning to hate the new régime and I was thinking of packing up and smuggling myself and my daughter over the border into Austria. It wasn't difficult; there were plenty of people to help you.

'Well, why didn't you go you'll ask me? I'll tell you. The new régime had one great virtue—it encouraged learning. Anybody who wanted to study could. And for nothing. A coal miner's daughter could go to a conservatorium if she wanted to. Well it so happened that my daughter wanted to study and she was a great scholar. They gave her scholarships and gold medals and free holidays. You can imagine how good she was when they admitted her to the university without once worrying about her middle-class origin as they say over there. And they didn't even force her to take part in politics. She wasn't interested in politics—she only wanted to study biological science. And what is more: they gave her a living allowance almost the equal of a worker's wage.

'Now do you see why I didn't take her away. I have only her to live for. So I put up with all the pin pricks and the bullying

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officials. I don't say anything. I wear a smile. I am a quiet man. Why should I open my mouth? I will only hurt my daughter. Another few years and she becomes a doctor of science and then a doctor of medicine and who knows but that she mightn't become a professor and have the world at her feet.

'You know it was on her account that we got a flat in a new block built for university people; professors and students. That was early last year. Some of the people who got flats had been fascists in the old times but now they were pretending to be great supporters of the new régime. There was only one other Jew in the place. He was an old Communist from Bela Kun's days and he was a professor of education. He often talked to me. Usually I didn't like Communists stopping to talk to me. When I saw one coming I used to say to myself: "here comes trouble". But with this old Communist I only had pleasure. He always praised my daughter. You can imagine how proud I was when he said that one day the whole of Hungary would know my daughter's name.

'I missed him when he went away to lecture in Prague. It was about the time when the educated people, especially the Communists, were really beginning to squabble amongst themselves. All the time they argued. They were holding meetings every night in our building. Mind you, things were happening everywhere. Even in my co-operative men who had been very quiet suddenly found tongue and began to abuse the Government. I didn't like it. It worried me. But I really got frightened when I saw a fascist, an old Arrow Cross leader, visit one of the professors in our flats. And a few days later in our courtyard, anti-Government leaflets were given out under the noses of the Communists. They were so busy squabbling among themselves they couldn't see anything.

'A few days afterwards when I was coming home from work a man joined me and walked along with me. His face was vaguely familiar. He began to talk about the situation. I could see he knew what he was talking about. "Mark my words", he said, "there's going to be bloodshed yet". And then out of the blue he gives me a card and says: "when the trouble starts and you decide to reach freedom don't forget to go to this address in Vienna. You'll get 150 American dollars and they'll arrange for you to go to the United States. Every Hungarian will get the same. Don't forget to tell everybody you know". Near my home he left me and then I remembered that years before he'd been pointed out to me as a man who arranged flights abroad. He certainly knew what

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he was talking about. A couple of weeks later the trouble started. If you ask me how it started I couldn't tell you. Because once I heard the guns going off I took to the cellar. So did 25 others. But at first my daughter didn't want to come with me. I pleaded with her. We had always been together from those terrible days of Hitler, I said. In the end she did as I asked her. She is a very good daughter.

'We'd been in the cellar a day or so when a group of armed civilians let themselves in and said they were looking for my professor, the old Communist from Bela Kun's time. They wanted to shoot him, nothing more nor less. When they discovered that he wasn't with us they began to shout and curse. They walked around looking us up and down. One of them suddenly pointed his rifle at me and called me "you dirty Jew". He was going to shoot me because, he said, all Jews were Communists and secret policemen. I thought my end had come. I had managed to evade Hitler only to fall victim to these new hooligans, I thought. My mind was very clear though. Thank God he hasn't picked on my daughter, I said to myself. Better me than her. But all the same I fell on my knees before him and pleaded with him to spare me. I said I've been a quiet man all my life. "I don't like Communists any more than you", I said. He suddenly began to laugh. "I will spare you", he said, and with that he lifted his boot and kicked me like a dog. "But listen to me, Ikey", he said, "if you don't clear out of Hungary I'll kill you. There's going to be no room for Jews and Communists in the new Hungary". Then the troop left.

'Well, as soon as I hear the firing die down my daughter and I rushed back to the flat. We had to leave immediately, I said to her. She wept like a baby. She didn't want to go. She ran out of the flat and I ran after her. But I lost sight of her and I was nearly out of my mind. After an hour or so she returned to the flat. She had gone to look for some fellow students, but she had been stopped by a group of armed men who told her that all the students were being seized by the Russians and sent off to Siberia.

'That night we left Budapest and when we crossed the border we were met by Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen and Austrian policemen who all made a fuss of us and sent us on to Vienna by bus. And where do you think we were taken to? Correct. That office where we collected 150 American dollars. And the Americans there called us heroes but said they couldn't send us to America right away. We were sent to a camp instead.

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'To tell you the bitter truth, when we got to the camp we found that the Hungarian Jews were housed in one compound, the non-Jewish Hungarians in another and there was a strong body of Austrian police in between to prevent the Hungarian Arrow Cross men from attacking the Jews. As we walked to our quarters several men from the non-Jewish side shouted to us: "We'll get you yet, you dirty Jews". In that moment I knew what I had got myself into. I couldn't look my daughter in the face. What bitter freedom I had bought for us! I had brought ruin to her.

'Now what else is there to tell you? We didn't go to America. They wouldn't have us. If they had known what a scholar my daughter was they would have taken us. They were taking all the scientists, especially those who know about physics. But my daughter wouldn't tell them who she was and she wouldn't let me. So we were sent here. . . .

'Now my poor girl works in a factory and when she comes home in the evenings she is nearly dead. It breaks my heart to see her. I ask her to forgive me. She says she has nothing to forgive me for but she can't forgive herself. "I am to blame", she says. Since she received a letter from a fellow student in Budapest she has been filled with melancholy. She says she should have known better than to believe those men who told her the students were being shipped to Siberia.

'So now you see why I need a job. If I had a job I would save the last penny and send my daughter to the university here. You must have money to send a girl to the university here, they tell me. . . . At lot of money, you say. . . . Oh, I see. It's a free country, but nothing's free. . . .'

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LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM

WORLD TRADE and rivalries are topics here this month. Israel gets a breathing space, whilst the important subject of 'H-bomb Pacifism' comes to the fore. As to Women's Wages, discussion begins to turn on what practical steps must be taken. The One Guinea prize is not awarded this month. Having to go to press early in the month, letters for January must reach us no later than Thursday, December 5. So—short and speedy, please, to:

THE EDITOR, LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM,
134, Ballards Lane,
London, N.3.

★

Economic 'Brinkmanship'?

With all these inventions in the air, perhaps it is worth recalling that in the thirties the U.S.A. pioneered a remarkable invention of capitalism, which socialism could never think of, let alone achieve. The Administration Aided Agriculture by paying its vast farming community *not* to produce grain and farm products. (There was an admirable living newspaper made about it, called *Triple A Ploughed Under.*) Thus the farmers, who otherwise had nothing to lose but their vote, were kept alive, clothed, in their right mind and saved from the educational processes through which the city workers were passing. They even remained willing to defend the American Way of Life; and the grapes of their wrath were not trampled out. However, the bankers regarded this enlightened capitalist invention as savouring too much of socialist planning, just so soon as the danger of revolution seemed past.

Today in the foremost capitalist country they have stream-lined their invention. The government agency no longer pays farmers not to produce. It buys up the 'surplus product' (at the taxpayers' expense) and 'banks' it, until there is a chance to flog it to some country whose economy is not yet wholly ruined by U.S. monopolists' prices. Or perhaps the 'banked' grain can be used as cheap 'aid 'to keep in line those backward countries which are beginning to look so forward? The grief this causes other countries producing food for export is well illustrated by Canada and her 'surplus' wheat. Mr. Diefenbaker's 'bleat', referred to by your correspondent W. Williamson, produced no effect on the tough numbers from Whitehall and the White House, when all three met to iron out their little differences before the Royal Circus hit town. Having been bluntly told to like it or do the other thing, Canada is doing the other thing—which, in this day and age, means that she is negotiating to sell her surplus wheat to China. No doubt Tory Diefenbaker looks defiantly or

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wistfully over his shoulder; for a business journal remarks that this transaction 'may have a considerable effect on the U.S. attitude to the whole question of trade with China', and induce 'businessmen to push for a relaxation in the embargo'.

After all, if Ceylon, Morocco, both German States and Vietnam (to quote the most recently announced trade agreements) can trade with China, why should not Canada, that pillar of N.A.T.O., make a little breach in the Chinese wall between the two world markets? One must live. It should give Canada's Tory Premier a 'sympathetic understanding' of others. If Egypt and Syria, if India and Indonesia, if Canada and Ceylon, don't like the trade terms one side of the wall, it will take a lot to stop them looking over it today to watch the other children happily at play.

But what happens when the division of the world into two exclusive markets, originally intended to hamper the development of the socialist world, begins to break up, because it is the unstable capitalist world market that is being hampered, and the expanding socialist world market which proves the stronger? Pundits claim they have no need to panic yet. The prime need of the countries of Asia and Africa, they say, will be for capital investment for many years to come; look at India. Yes, and look at Egypt and the Aswan Dam. Try too much blackmail and terrifying new ways may be found for doing without the 'development aid'. National resources may be nationalised instead of being allowed to 'attract' foreign capital. They may get themselves long-term low-rate loans and trade agreements from countries where economy is planned. They may benefit from exercising a bit of thrift on the local capitalist, or practising abstinence from military expenditure. To bring back moon-gold from outer space is more probable than disinterested aid from imperialism.

The 're-division of the world market' begins to take on a different meaning in the Year 41 of the Socialist Era. It would be useful to see some thinking done aloud in *Labour Monthly* about this subject, and about what we used to call East-West trade. Because that will make the background to the struggles in industry, when the Bank Rate and the Government's other devices begin to take their toll.

A. M. HANMER,
Leeds.

Fakers & Forgers

On November 8, *The Times* published a couple of paragraphs describing how 'quantities of anti-Communist propaganda . . . was (*sic*) sent to reach people in Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, Minsk and other cities in time for the fortieth anniversary of the October revolution'. Blandly their Special Correspondent continued: 'Much of it was smuggled in in the form of *faked Russian newspapers* (my italics), such as the *Literary Gazette, Komsomolskaya Pravda* and others'. It seems that 'several anti-Communist organisations abroad co-operated, but it was chiefly the work of the emigré organisation known as the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists . . . using balloons and secret couriers' and other methods.

Yet there are those who would still deny the Foreign Office complicity in forging copies of *Pravda* in the early 'twenties; and, of course, in the forged Zinoviev Letter!

Imagine the uproar if 'faked' copies of *The Times* were smuggled into Britain 'in time' for Armistice Day, shall we say? Have we become

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so accustomed to the Foreign Office's Cold War and Washington's 'brinkmanship' that the leading British journal can blandly print with approval such a news item without turning a hair, nor raising a passing comment even from the lunatic fringe of Cambridge dons, nor provoking a squeak from the most moral bishop of either House of Convocation?

WILLIAM BULGIN,
Manchester.

Women's Wages: Time to Act!

A great deal has been said in Labour Discussion Forum about the present scandalously low rates of pay received by women, with special reference to particular industries. I would like to ask: 'Where do we go from here?' and to make some suggestions.

Perhaps we can learn some lessons from the record of the past ten years. Equal pay by stages has been achieved for non-manual workers in the civil service, local government, teaching and some of the nationalised industries. However, in private industry neither non-manual nor manual women workers have had any success. Official figures for industries covered by a regular Ministry of Labour enquiry show that since 1947 *hourly earnings* of manual workers have changed as follows:

April, 1947	32s. 0d.	19s. 5d.
April, 1957	59s. 8d.	36s. 4d.

That is, women's hourly earnings on the average were 61 per cent of men's in 1947 and are still only 61 per cent. In other words, there has been practically no change in the situation. Any trade unionist can recall dozens of wage increases in recent years, in which the women's increases were considerably less than the men's, and these have been accepted by the unions with comparatively little protest.

Why have the civil servants and teachers had a certain measure of success and workers in private industry had none?

It may have been partly a vote-catching gesture on the part of the Tory Government, but that is not the whole story. In these occupations there has been for many years a high level of trade union organisation among both men and women. The women form a comparatively high proportion of the membership of the unions and, being convinced of the justice of their case, have likewise convinced the men, who have always supported the demand for equal pay. The unions concerned have taken every opportunity of getting publicity and public support.

I think, therefore, that those of us in private industry have to recognise that we shall never achieve equal pay if we do not, first, organise women; secondly, convince women themselves that equal pay and equal opportunity are their right (not always an easy thing); and then force the men to take action in support of the women. It has to be recognised that this is no easy task: it means raising the question at every possible opportunity and being jeered at for doing so—I have had plenty of experience in my own union from people who should know better. 'Feminist' is now apparently a term of abuse, even from women; but plenty of women are quite willing to climb on the backs of those who are 'feminists'. We should lose no opportunity for putting the case for equal pay wherever we can. How many of us, for example, ever go to our Co-operative Quarterly Meetings and point out that the co-operative movement in general is as reluctant

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as private industry to grant equal pay? We must try to make local trades councils active: in this way maybe we can make rank and file trade unionists aware that the fight for women's rights is also the responsibility of men.

I wonder sometimes if we want equal pay badly enough: an empty belly is a better stimulus than abstract justice and there are not many empty bellies even among women workers these days. On the other hand, the suffragettes were not mainly inspired by hunger and they pressed their claim by means which would make a respectable modern trade unionist shudder with horror. I think until we are inspired with that spirit we shall not succeed.

AUDREY HUNT,
London.

What's Wrong with 'H-bomb Pacifism'?

In his Notes of the Month, R.P.D. obviously feels that those of us who supported unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb at the Labour Party Conference, split the left; he attributes the motive reasoning behind this as 'mainly on Pacifist lines.'

Dutt thinks we were wrong on this issue. However, perhaps he would say rather more about this point. I am rather mystified as to where he really stands here; for earlier in the same issue (page 485) he says; 'The "realist", statesmen-like speeches of the Macmillan-Bevan school, claiming that Britain must be a "Nuclear Power" in order to be a Great Power on an equality with the Soviet Union and the United States, begin to shrivel in the new perspective.'

J. ELLIS,
Thirsk.

. . . It Doesn't Win Disarmament

This is a fair question. There is a division among left supporters: the rival views were very clearly expressed by two conference delegates, Councillor Joan Maynard and Councillor John Lawrence, in our November issue. In the Editorial Notes I suggested opposition both to the argument of Aneurin Bevan that Britain must be a nuclear power in order to fulfil her 'international commitments' (*i.e.*, commitments of NATO and the Anglo-American Alliance): and to the Norwood resolution for British unilateral nuclear disarmament, which in fact divided the left forces.

We all desire the banning of tests, nuclear weapons and nuclear war. Such a ban requires international agreement. The Soviet Union is for such an international ban. Britain and the United States at present oppose such an international ban, claiming that they must maintain their nuclear war strategy. What is our job in this situation? Surely to exert all efforts to ensure that Britain stands with the Soviet Union for such a ban. The overwhelming majority of other countries in the world and all world opinion would support such a joint British-Soviet stand. Thus aggressive nuclear war planners in the United States would be isolated, and the most favourable situation created for establishing an international ban.

Does unilateral renunciation by Britain offer a more effective alternative policy? The Norwood resolution, in place of urging that Britain should co-operate with the lead already given by the Soviet Union for a ban on nuclear weapons by international agreement, proposed instead that a Labour Government should 'take the lead by refusing to continue to test, manufacture or use nuclear weapons'; and should 'appeal to the peoples of the other countries to follow their lead'. What is involved in the choice between these

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two lines of policy? It is not a question of whether or not Britain should spend resources on manufacturing of nuclear weapons; not a single left supporter would vote a penny for this and it may be noted that the Communist Party is the only political party which, at the last election, expressly included in its election programme opposition to the proposal that Britain should manufacture the H-bomb. What is in question is the most effective political platform and programme for mobilising the fight against nuclear weapons and for banishing the menace of nuclear war.

Does the Norwood resolution offer an effective alternative? On the contrary. The resolution does not propose removing American bomber bases from Britain nor ending the Anglo-American alliance. Indeed, some of its supporters have argued that Britain need not manufacture nuclear weapons, since Britain is already 'protected' by the U.S. 'great deterrent' and can therefore 'safely' make the 'moral gesture' of renouncing the manufacture and possession of the accursed weapons. This would be a very curious 'moral gesture'. Others have argued that if such a resolution could be carried by the Labour Party, then it would be possible to demand of the Soviet Union a similar renunciation, *i.e.*, that the Soviet Union should be disarmed *in face of the United States H-bomb offensive*. This would not be a progressive, but a reactionary policy.

The demand for unilateral renunciation by Britain is thus politically meaningless so long as Britain is only the junior partner of the Anglo-American nuclear alliance, *and such renunciation does not apply to U.S.A.* It is tactically harmful, since it divides the left (as shown by the low vote obtained compared with the left vote on other issues), and sidetracks the essential united fight to secure an international ban on nuclear weapons and nuclear war.

R. PALME DUTT,
London, N.3.

Happy Return

It is 35 years ago that I bought my first *L.M.* in Derby, England. If my memory serves me rightly, September was the month and 1921 the year. Oh! what would I give to have that copy now! I had volunteered my services to work on munitions in Britain during the first world war and was not repatriated until 1921. The ship that returned us to Canada was the old s.s. *Corsican* and a day out from Liverpool we hit into a raging storm. On account of the weather being so bad we were confined to our cabins for 5 or 6 days leaving only to take nourishment which refused to stay down. Seasickness was rampant. There we were, six to a cabin four decks below and everyone sick. In a few days I recovered from the sickness and was able to keep the food down. Opening my suitcase I found my *L.M.* and after reading it I passed it along to my comrades; it was never returned.

Canadian readers who can afford $3 would be well advised to take out a direct postal subscription. It reaches you much quicker. Send $3, or $3.50 if first class mail, to The Manager, Labour Monthly, 134, Ballard's Lane, London, N.3.

Something tells me that one of my companions valued that *L.M.* as much as I did. Today in the Canadian Labour Movement the magazine is highly valued as a magazine of Labour Unity and its leading articles used as a basis of educational discussion here. A few lines regarding our four months holidays

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in Britain last year. My wife, who is Canadian born, Irish and Scottish parentage, believes there is no place just like the British Isles and its working class. She just cannot understand why the British emigrate to Canada. Why leave such a background of struggle to start all over again in Canada. After visiting Britain she is very confident that the British working class will solve all these problems of working class unity within the next decade while the North American continent will still be a capitalist bastion.

A. E. PHILLIPS,

Canada.

Book Reviews

THE FASCISTS FEARED HIM

The Modern Prince (and other writings), by Antonio Gramsci. (Lawrence & Wishart. 192 pp. *21s.*)

IN 1928 Mussolini's public prosecutor, demanding sentence on a thirty-seven-year-old Italian Communist, said: 'For twenty years we must stop that brain from working'. They imprisoned him for nine years and broke his health, but did not stop his brain. At his death in 1937 Antonio Gramsci left behind him a remarkable literary output, much of it written in prison under all the disadvantages attending such work.

Gramsci was born in Sardinia of poor parents and went to work at eleven. He studied, won a scholarship, went to Turin University and joined the working-class movement in opposition to the First World War. In 1921 he became a foundation member of the Italian Communist Party and in 1924, after visiting the U.S.S.R., its secretary. He fought the Fascist dictatorship in the political and industrial fields. His best testimonial was that given by the public prosecutor at his trial. His published writings, translated into English by Dr. Louis Marks, show an insight seldom rivalled into working-class strategy and tactics. The essay which gives the book its title, *The Modern Prince,* was written in prison. Just as Machiavelli in his *Prince* had set out to show how a statesman could conquer power from the feudalists for the rising bourgeoisie, so Gramsci sets out to show how a Communist Party can conquer power from the capitalists for the working class. He is worth reading for his wise cautions against arrogance and bureaucracy on the one hand, and against, on the other hand, letting opponents' attacks determine our policy. For dogmatists and revisionists, intellectuals and anti-intellectuals, this is a 'must' book.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON.

ALLIES FOR BRITONS

The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire. 1957 Edition by R. Palme Dutt. (Lawrence & Wishart. 536 pp. *30s.*)

THIS new and revised edition is very nearly a new book. Most notable is the portrayal and analysis of the new features of the anti-imperialist movement since 1954. India's great strides both in external and internal policy are underlined. So is its close co-operation with People's China at the head of the Bandung nations, now making a powerful impact on world affairs. Key factor in this situation is the increasing Socialist economic aid to newly-independent nations, now fighting

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for economic liberation and against being involved in imperialist war pacts. An entirely new chapter on the Middle East serves to underline the rapid growth of the Arab liberation movements and helps to explain recent events in Egypt and Syria and to clarify the basic issues at stake.

Equally important is a chapter, almost entirely new, on 'Next Steps to Colonial Liberation', so closely related to the fight for world peace. All this leads to the main theme so long stressed by the author, that: '. . . the allies of the British working class and of the entire British people against British imperialism are first and foremost the colonial peoples'. Two sentences stand out, though they appear in all previous editions: 'It is not only the liberation of the colonial peoples that is at stake. It is the liberation of Britain.' These words should be emblazoned on the banners of the Labour movement.

IDRIS COX.

BOOKS REVIEWED IN 1957

Author or Editor	Title (and Reviewer)	Page
Adenauer, Konrad	**World Indivisible** (Gordon Schaffer)	94
Arnott, D. G.	**Our Nuclear Adventure** (Clemens Dutt)	527
Bromberger, Merry and Serge	**Les Secrets de l'expedition d'Egypte** (D. N. Pritt)	336
Chen, Jack	**New Earth** (R. T. F. Turner)	552-553
Chinese Foreign Languages Press	**Handbook on People's China** (P.A.)	480
Cockburn, John	**The Hungry Heart** (Allen Hutt)	380
Coppard, A. E.	**It's Me, O Lord!** (George Willoughby)	333
Dutt, R. Palme	**Crisis of Britain and the British Empire** (I. Cox)	571
Fox, R. M.	**Jim Larkin** (C. Desmond Greaves)	189
Goldberg, A. J.	**A.F.L.-C.I.O., Labour United** (J.W.)	335
Goldberg, Harvey (Editor)	**American Radicals: Some Problems and Personalities** (J.W.)	287
Gollan, John (Editor)	**Marxism Today, No. 1** (R.P.D.)	528
Gottlieb, W. W.	**Studies in Secret Diplomacy During the First World War** (D. N. Pritt)	480
Gramsci, Antonio	**The Modern Prince** (A. Robertson)	571
Hughes, Emrys	**Keir Hardie** (Allen Hutt)	380
Ilvin, M., and Segal, E.	**Do You Know?** (James Kirkup)	432
Indian Government	**Nuclear Explosions and Their Effects** (D. G. Arnott)	47
Johnstone, Archie	**Ivan the Not-so-Terrible** (C.P.D.)	48
Knight, Frida	**The Strange Case of Thomas Walker** (G. Rudé)	284
Leff, S. and V.	**From Witchcraft to World Health** (Bruce Cardew)	95
Lenin, V. I.	**The Development of Capitalism in Russia** (Maurice Dobb)	476
Lindsay, Jack	**After the Thirties: The Novel in Britain and its Future** (Alick West)	47
Labour Research Department	**Tenant's Guide to the 1957 Rent Act** (R.P.A.)	384
Marx, K., and Engels, F.	**The Holy Family** (Clemens Dutt)	334
Montagu, Ivor	**Land of Blue Sky** (Andrew Rothstein)	141
Montgomery, John	**The Twenties** (George Willoughby)	334
Needham, Joseph	**Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. II** (B. Farrington)	94
Obruchev, V. A.	**Plutonia** (P.A.)	384
Pelling, Henry	**America and the British Left** (Henry Collins)	238
Reitlinger, Gerald	**The S.S., Al'bi of a Nation, 1922-1945** (Ivor Montagu)	142
Ritkheyu	**Stories from Chukotka** (Reginald Bridgeman)	190
Rothstein, Andrew	**The Soviet Union and Socialism** (Clemens Dutt)	191
Sargant, William	**Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brain-Washing** (R. Malcolm)	380
Schuman, Julian	**Assignment China** (R.F.B.)	480
Segal, Ronald M. (Editor)	**Africa South, No. 1** (D.B.)	144
Simon, Brian (Editor)	**Psychology in the Soviet Union** (M.H.)	383
Skosyrev, P.	**Soviet Turkmenistan** (P.A.)	192
Strong, Anna Louise	**The Stalin Era** (George Hardy)	286
U.S.S.R. Statistical Administration	**U.S.S.R. Economy: A Statistical Abstract** (R.P.A.)	240
Wells, H. K.	**Ivan P. Pavlov** (S. Leff)	285
Wiking, Paula	**The Changing Germans** (Gordon Schaffer)	94
Winnington, Alan	**Tibet** (D. N. Pritt)	287
World Federation of Scientific Workers	**Unmeasured Hazards: An Analysis of the effects of tests of Atomic and Thermonuclear Weapons** (D. G. Arnott)	47
Wright, Frederick	**Verge of Glory** (George Willoughby)	333
Wright, Richard	**Black Power** (Ivor Montagu)	335

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LABOUR MONTHLY

Index to Volume XXXIX

I—AUTHORS AND ARTISTS

		Page
ADAMS, W. S.	The Indian Revolt of 1857	272
ALLEY, REWI	New Poems of Mao Tse-tung (Translation)	120-121, 184, 254, 456-457
AMBROSE, L.	Some Problems in Engineering	303
ANDERSON, PER-OLOW	Port Said, November, 1956 (Photograph)	168
AMINE, Dr. MUSTAFA	A Voice from Syria	463
ARNOT, R. PAGE	China First Seen: Leaves From a Diary (I-IV)	69, 179, 323, 411
	Class Strategy	193
	Soviet Turkmenistan (R)	192
	Plutonia (R)	384
	Handbook on People's China (R)	480
	U.S.S.R. Economy (R)	240
	Tenant's Guide to the 1957 Rent Act (R)	384
ARNOTT, D. G.	Nuclear War Effects (R)*	47
	Clean Bombs and Dirty Politics	355
BERGER, JOHN	The New Nihilists	123
BRIDGEMAN, REGINALD	The Chukchi (R)	190
BROCKWAY, FENNER, M.P.	Racial Discrimination	61
D.B.	*Africa South* (R)	144
R.F.B.	Ten Years of Change (R)	480
CARDEW, BRUCE	Health Through the Ages (R)	95
CHEN, JACK	Drawings of China	552-553
COLLINS, HENRY	Economic Forecast: Set Stormy	65
	America and the British Left (R)	238
'COMMONER'	The Altrincham Affair	459
COPPOCK, SIR RICHARD	Housing	17
COX, IDRIS	Conflicts Within the Commonwealth	370
	Allies for Britons (R)	571
CURWIN, DANIEL	European Common Market	160
DOBB, MAURICE	Lenin on Capitalism (R)	476
DUTT, CLEMENS	Life in the U.S.S.R. (R)	48
	Socialism and the U.S.S.R. (R)	191
	A Marxist Classic (R)	334
	Nuclear Progress (R)	527
DUTT, R. PALME	Notes of the Month: Britain and the World	1
	Notes of the Month: True Blue Democracy	49
	Notes of the Month: Arms and the Man	97
	Notes of the Month: Into Battle	145
	Notes of the Month: Nuclear Nihilists	241
	Notes of the Month: Labour Policy Battle	289
	Notes of the Month: Israel and the Arab Middle East	337
	Notes of the Month: Operation Chameleon	385
	Notes of the Month: Last Thoughts for Brighton	433
	Notes of the Month: Happy Birthday	481
	Notes of the Month: Economics and Politics of Increasing Misery	529
	A Welcome New Periodical (R)	528
FARRINGTON, BENJAMIN	Chinese Scientific Thought (R)	94
GALLACHER, WILLIAM	From Clydeside to Neva	501
	End this Bi-Partisanship!	547
GARDNER, JIM	War on the Unions	542
GRAHAM, T.	The Clash in Engineering	108
GREAVES, C. DESMOND	Jim Larkin (R)	189
GOMULKA, W.	Workers' Councils in Poland	317
HAAS, LEO	Life's School (Drawing)	72
HARDY, GEORGE	The Stalin Era (R)	286
HEINEMANN, MARGOT	Shareholding or Socialism?	398
HOGARTH, PAUL	Drawings of Africa	264-265
HOOD, KATHERINE	The Labour Party's Pension Plan	366
HUTT, ALLEN	Dona Torr (*Obituary article*)	132
	James Keir Hardie (R)	380
	Morris, Marxism and Typography	467
M.H.	Soviet Psychologists (R)	383
ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS	The 'Indian Mutiny', 1857 (Drawing)	216
JIQUIDI, A.	'Haiduc' (Rumanian Wood Engraving)	360
KIRKUP, JAMES	A Children's Book (R)	432

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

		Page
LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM	Contributions from: Alan Bennett, John Delahoy, A. Lewis, H. Rathbone, E. L. Vaughan, Cllr. T. Vernon	41-45
	J. Dix, C. Drummond, A. Grainger, Katherine Hood, J. Lawrence, A. McDonald, A. M. Richards, G. Williams	87-92
	Joyce Barker, W. H. Daly, S. Maitland, Cllr. Peggy Middleton, L.C.C., Harry Stacy, S. Turner	135-139
	G. Bolton, Rose Deeley, Rose Finch, J. Nicolson, Cllr. A. W. Stallard	185-188
	Cllr. T. Barker, P. Debell, Cllr. G. Drain, Cllr. A. G. Keyse, 'Lucky Jim', M. Shaw, Cllr. A. Wolfe	226-231
	Val Bannister, Helen Clapson, R. Gore, W.G., Mollie Hicks, C.M.M., Cllr. Bob Selkirk, Cllr. Renee Short, L.C.C., D. Silk, B. Stern, E. H. Tudor	278-283
	Miriam Carter, R. Dixon, A. M. Richards, A. Saunders, 'Socialist Sailor'	328-331
	Mickey Doyle, L. Gibson, R. V. Ness	374-377
	Tess Gorringe, Geoffrey Maddison, Louise Ross, E. E. Stafford, B. Stern, Cllr. T. Vernon	426-431
	R. P. Dutt, Joyce Farrelly, H. Levy, Agnes McLean, W. Williamson	469-475
	R. P. Dutt, A. L. Jones, H. Levy, I. Montagu, 'Rebel', J. L. Smith, Wolf Wayne, J. A. Wilson, T. M. Wood	521-526
	W. Bulgin, R. P. Dutt, J. Ellis, A. H. Hanmer, A. Hunt, A. E. Phillips	566-571
LAWRENCE, JOHN, COUNCILLOR	What Next for the Left?	514
LEFF, S.	Pavlov (R)	285
LEFF, S. and V.	Health Through the Ages (Authors' comment on Review)	95
LENIN, V. I.	A Bacchanalia of Lies	82
MALCOLM, R.	Truth and Falsity (R)	380
MAO TSE-TUNG	Poems	120-121, 184, 254, 456-457
MARX FAMILY	Letters from Jenny Marx	30
	Marx and the Fenians	76
	Arrest of Jenny and Eleanor Marx	127
	Struggle Against the Anarchists	129
	'Capital', Ninetieth Anniversary	408
	Marx's Translator	420
MAYNARD, JOAN, COUNCILLOR	Highlights at Brighton	511
McWHINNIE, T. F.	Conference in Ghana	167
MIKUNIS, S.	Israel	221
MONTAGU, IVOR	Nazi Record (R)	142
	The Rats of Bikini	262
	A Yankee at the Court of King Ghana (R)	335
	'No' To the No-Men	446
PARKIN, BEN, M.P.	Socialist-Communist Relations, III	13
PRITT, D. N., Q.C.	Eye Witness in Kerala	207
	Best Book on Tibet (R)	287
	Suez Plot (R)	336
	Light on Krupps'	414
	Sordid 'Diplomacy' (R)	478
	Forty Years On	499
'QUÆSTOR'	The Fight for Disarmament	212
	Europe One or Divided?	307
ROBERTSON, A.	The Fascists feared him	571
ROTHSTEIN, ANDREW	Workers' Councils	112
	Outer Mongolia (R)	141
	Factory Committees	173
	Workers' Power: A postscript	232
	The Russian Workers in the Socialist Revolution	502
RUDÉ, G.	A Revolutionary Diplomat	556
SCHAFFER, GORDON	A Manchester Radical (R)	284
	Contrast in Germany (R)	94
	H-bomb for Adenauer?	259
	Conspiracy Down Under	314
SCOTT, J. R.	Some Thoughts on Engineering	255
STANLEY, FRANK	Youth at Work	37
'STUDENT OF AFFAIRS'	Notes on Inflation	404
TEMPEST, PETER	Hands (Poem)	378
TUCKETT, ANGELA	Unstable Giants	79
	You Can Read On, If You Choose	423
	Readers' News, Fund and Circulation	*(See inside covers)*
VERNON, TOM, COUNCILLOR	How To Kill the Rent Act	359
	The Rent Act Now	518
WATEN, JUDAH	Bitter Freedom	561
WEST, ALICK	Which Way in Fiction (R)	47
WILLOUGHBY, GEORGE	Coppard and Others (R)	333
WILSON, HELEN	'Unwilling to Wait With Folded Hands. . .' (Drawing)	312
WINTERTON, E. M.	Rising Tide at Blackpool	453

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		Page
'WOMAN IN BLACK'	The Mourning Vigil	268
J.W.	Radical Weakness (R)	287
	U.S. Trade Unions (R)	335
YOUNG, E. P.	Hungary's Background	22
	Where Is That Defence White Paper Now?	551
ZAKHARIEV, V.	Bulgarian Wood Engravings	24

II—SUBJECTS

AUSTRALIA	Conspiracy Down Under	314
BLAKE, WILLIAM	Bi-centenary	504-505
BRITAIN	Britain and the World	1
	True Blue Democracy	49
	The New Nihilists	123
	A Manchester Radical (R)	284
	The Altrincham Affair	459
	The More It Changes	462
CANADA	Labour Discussion Forum	282, 283, 475
CHINA	Chinese Scientific Thought (R)	94
	Chinese Poetry	119
	Poems by Mao Tse-tung	120-121, 184, 254, 456-457
	China First Seen (Diary I-IV)	69, 179, 323, 411
COLONIALISM	L.D.F.† on Colonies	45, 139
	Racial Discrimination	61
	Conference in Ghana	167
	Conflicts Within the Commonwealth	370
	Allies for Britons	57
ECONOMIC SITUATION	Economic Forecast: Set Stormy	65
	European Common Market	160
	Notes on Inflation	404
	Seven Per Cent	488
	Economics and Politics of Increasing Misery	529
	War on the Unions	542
	L.D.F. on Economics	566
EDITORIAL	Chinese Poetry	119
	You Can Read On, If You Choose	423
EUROPE	Nazi Record (R)	142
	Europe One or Divided?	307
GERMANY	H-bomb for Adenauer?	259
	Light on Krupps'	414
GHANA	Conference in Ghana	167
	A Yankee at the Court of King Ghana (R)	335
HOUSING AND RENTS	Housing	17
	L.D.F. on Housing Policy and Rents	44, 229-230, 281-282
	L.D.F. on the Rent Act	43, 92, 138, 227-228, 427
	How to Kill the Rent Act	359
	The Rent Act Now	518
HUNGARY	Hungary's Background	22
	Bitter Freedom	561
ILLUSTRATIONS	Bulgarian Wood Engravings	24-25
	Life's School (Drawing)	72-73
	Port Said, November, 1956 (Photograph)	168-169
	The 'Indian Mutiny', 1857	216-217
	Drawings of Africa	264-265
	'Unwilling to Wait with Folded Hands'	312-313
	'Haiduc', Wood Engraving	360-361
	Karl Marx and excerpt from 'Capital'	408-409
	Drawings of China	552-553
INDIA	Eye-Witness in Kerala	207
	The Indian Revolt of 1857	272
IRELAND	Jim Larkin (R)	189
ISRAEL	Israel	221
	Israel and the Arab Middle East	337
ITALY	L.D.F. Controversy	470-472, 521-524
JAPAN	The Fascists feared him (R)	571
LABOUR MOVEMENT	Labour Discussion Forum	330, 430
	Socialist-Communist Relations, III	13
	L.D.F. on Socialist-Communist Relations	90-91, 139
	L.D.F. on Overtime	42, 86-88, 137, 188
	Into Battle	145
	L.D.F. on Labour's Programme	187, 231, 331
	Class Strategy	193
	Labour Policy Battle	289
	The Labour Party's Pension Plan	366
	Operation Chameleon	385
	Shareholding or Socialism?	398
	L.D.F. on Pensions	431, 526
	Last Thoughts for Brighton	433

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		Page
	After Brighton	492
	Where Do We Go From Here?	511
	Highlights at Brighton	511
	What Next for the Left?	514
	L.D.F. on Socialism	525
	End this Bi-Partisanship!	547
LENIN'S WRITINGS	A Bacchanalia of Lies	82
	Lenin on Capitalism (R)	476
MARX AND MARXISM	Letters from Jenny Marx	30
	Marx and the Fenians	76
	Arrest of Jenny and Eleanor Marx	127
	A Marxist Classic (R)	334
	Marx's Translator	420
MONGOLIA	Outer Mongolia (R)	141
MORRIS, WILLIAM	Morris, Marxism and Typography	467
OBITUARIES	Montagu Slater	64
	Ben Bradley	75
	James Hugh Blair Figgins	81
	Dona Torr	132
	Fred Henderson	397
	Joan Tuckett	452
	V. Gordon Childe	498
POLAND	Workers' Councils in Poland	317
PRESS	Unstable Giants	79
SYRIA	A Voice From Syria	463
SOCIALISM	Socialism Conquers Space	483
TRADE UNIONISM	Youth at Work	37
	L.D.F. on Automation	89
	The Clash in Engineering	108
	L.D.F. on Organisation	137, 139, 431
	Conference in Ghana	167
	Some Thoughts on Engineering	225
	Some Problems in Engineering	303
	Rising Tide at Blackpool	453
	War on the Unions	542
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO		48, 60, 107, 220, 288, 306, 377, 410, 445, 520, 550
U.S.A.	L.D.F. on U.S. Penetration	283, 330, 377, 430
U.S.S.R.	The Chukchi (R)	190
	Socialism and the U.S.S.R. (R)	191
	Pavlov (R)	285
	The Stalin Era (R)	286
	Soviet Psychologists (R)	383
	Socialism Conquers Space	483
	Forty Years On	499
	From Clydeside to Neva	501
	The Russian Workers in the Socialist Revolution	502
WAR OR PEACE	Nuclear War Effects (R)	47
	Arms and the Man (R)	97
	L.D.F. on H-bomb	188, 278-280, 330, 376, 569
	The Fight for Disarmament	212
	Nuclear Nihilists (R)	241
	The Rats of Bikini	262
	The Mourning Vigil	268
	Clean Bombs and Dirty Politics	355
	'No' to the No-Men	446
	Sordid 'Diplomacy' (R)	478
	L.D.F. on Peace Demands	524
	Nuclear Progress (R)	527
	Where Is That Defence White Paper Now?	551
WOMEN	L.D.F. on Women's Wages	280, 329-330, 376, 428-429, 474, 568
WORKING CLASS HISTORY	Letter from Jenny Marx	30
	Marx and the Fenians	76
	Workers' Councils	112
	Arrest of Jenny and Eleanor Marx	127
	Dona Torr	132
	Factory Committees	173
	Workers' Power: A Postscript	232
	Workers' Councils in Poland	317
	James Keir Hardie (R)	380
	Marx's Translator	420
YOUTH	Youth at Work	37
	L.D.F. on Youth Problems	45, 88, 139, 186

* (R) stands for Review throughout.

† L.D.F. stands for Labour Discussion Forum throughout.

N.B.—A list of the books reviewed during 1957 will be found on page 572.

Published by the Proprietors, The Trinity Trust, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3, and printed by Wembley News, Wembley, Middlesex, Great Britain. Registered for transmission by Magazine Post to Canada, including Newfoundland.

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(*Continued from page ii of cover*)

Queen and her Cohorts' were spending 'a lot of money foolishly: after all, they are kindred souls to a Dulles or an Eisenhower; but the future belongs to mankind. We need progressive thinking, and articulate thinking, in this crazy mixed-up era. So keep up the good work!'

I will tell only one story this month about Group 3: *The Old-Timers.* We got a teasing letter from a regular who has hitherto been a mystery man to us. It turns out that he took part in a Polar Expedition over sixty years ago! He writes: 'You will realise that I'm no spring chicken; and when we get into the 'eighties, we get a feeling of laziness and think it time for others to step into the breach. This will not prevent me keeping up my subscription and support until I slip my cable. We old shellbacks are always fond of blowing our trumpets, you know.' But this old shellback does not mention that he has been quietly and indefatigably building circulation for many a year.

Which leads to another mystery figure in Group 4: *The New Regulars.* Each week we get a book of stamps—no covering letter. Is this from yet another pensioner, sent when he draws each month his pittance from the Post Office? Or is someone regularly sharing with us, in advance, the fruits of his Football Pool coming up, for which he is buying his weekly postal order? We shan't be too proud to accept a share in Pool winnings; even if we don't see our way, quite, to accept the advice of a Canadian reader, who suggests we run a grand sweepstake, whether legal or a bit dodgy. Christmas, New Year and birthday presents to and from fellow readers will be gratefully and gracefully received.

Finally, there is Group 5, which I call the *Praise and Progress* Letters. Such as the *Kent* reader who thanked us 'all, once again, for a November issue to put heart into all socialists'. And those who seized on the excellence of it to make new readers; so that we got messages: 'Sold out—rush us a dozen extras.' Donations received during October totalled:

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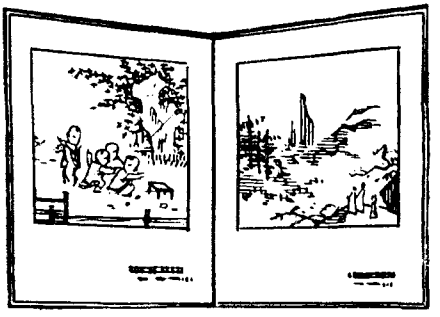

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